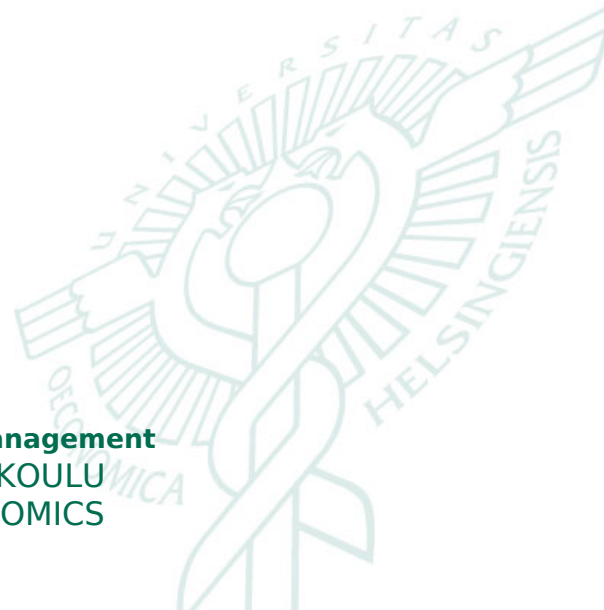


# DISCOURSE OF INTERNATIONAL INTERNSHIPS FROM A HOLISTIC PERSPECTIVE – Case: CEMS MIM network

International Business  
Master's thesis  
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2009

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Fall 2009

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laitosneuvoston kokouksessa \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_ 20\_\_\_\_ hyväksytty

arvosanalla \_\_\_\_\_

**DISCOURSE OF INTERNATIONAL INTERNSHIPS FROM A HOLISTIC PERSPECTIVE – Case: CEMS MIM network**

**Introduction**

International internship is currently a mandatory part of Community of European Management Schools (CEMS) curriculum which is a joint Master's degree in international management that can be studied in Helsinki School of Economics. Therefore, the topic was found important and was chosen as a focus of this thesis.

**Objectives**

The objective is to research the concept from a holistic perspective which includes the perspectives of each stakeholder in the international internship process; the MNC, the university and the student. The goal is to find the motivation(s) behind international internship programs as well as how these programs are managed and organized. In addition, the roles and expectations of each stakeholder in the international internship process are researched and discussed.

**Methodology**

This research utilizes a multi method research approach consisting of an on-line survey, semi structured interviews, the researcher's own observations and experiences as well as secondary data. The empirical data was collected exclusively within the CEMS MIM community.

**Findings**

MNCs have several practices in organizing internship programs. It was found that the main motivation for MNCs to organize international internship programs is talent management and employer branding as well as gaining fresh knowledge. University's role before and during the internship program was found significant only to a moderate extent. However, this was found positive since the MNCs were not supportive towards a university's extensive involvement during the international internship. Also, student's expectations towards the internship providers revealed that students seek to work in meaningful projects where they are given responsibility. This should be considered when planning the internship projects in MNCs in order to guarantee successful employer branding and talent management.

**Key Words:** Internship, International Internship, International Recruitment, Talent Management, Employer Branding

**TUTKIELMA KANSAINVÄLISISTÄ TYÖHARJOITTELUISTA  
KOKONAISVALTAISESTA NÄKÖKULMASTA – Case: CEMS MIM verkosto****Johdanto**

Kansainvälinen työharjoittelu on pakollinen osa Community of European Management Schools (CEMS) opetussuunnitelmaa, tutkintoa, jonka voi suorittaa Helsingin kauppakorkeakoulussa. Tämän vuoksi aihe koettiin tärkeäksi ja valittiin pro gradu tutkielman aiheeksi.

**Tutkielman tavoitteet**

Tutkielma käsittelee kansainvälistä työharjoittelua kokonaisvaltaisesta näkökulmasta, joka käsittää jokaisen sidosryhman, eli kansainvälisen yrityksen, yliopiston ja opiskelijan näkökulmat. Tavoitteena on löytää sidosryhmien motivaatioita osallistua ja tarjota kansainvälisiä työharjoitteluita, sekä tapoja, joilla organisaatiot hallinnoivat kansainvälisiä työharjoitteluitaan. Lisäksi eri sidosryhmien odotukset ja roolit työharjoitteluprosessin aikana ovat tarkastelun kohteena.

**Tutkimusmenetelmät**

Tutkimusmenetelmäksi valittiin menetelmä, joka hyödynsi eri tiedonkeruumenetelmiä, kuten internetpohjaista kyselyä, haastatteluja, tutkijan omia huomioita ja kokemuksia sekä toissijaista tietoa. Tietoa kerättiin yksinomaan CEMS MIM verkoston eri sidosryhmiltä.

**Tutkimustulokset**

Yrityksillä on useita käytäntöjä järjestää työharjoitteluita. Nämä käytännöt on eritelty ja niiden edut ja haitat on esitelty tässä tutkimuksessa. Lisäksi todettiin, että yritysten tärkein motivaatio järjestää kansainvälisiä työharjoitteluohjelmia on lahjakkuuden hallinta ja työnantajakuvan kehittäminen. Yliopiston roolin ennen työharjoitteluita ja sen aikana todettiin olevan vähäinen. Tätä pidettiin positiivisena asiana, sillä tutkimus osoitti myös, etteivät yritykset ole kovin kannustavia ylimääräisiä akateemisia tehtäviä kohtaan harjoittelun aikana. Lisäksi tämä tutkimus totesi, että opiskelijat olettavat kiinnostavia ja vastuullisia tehtäviä työharjoitteluiltaan ja jotta yritys onnistuisi lahjakkuuden hallinta tavoitteessaan, tämä seikka tulee ottaa huomioon työharjoitteluita suunniteltaessa.

**Avainsanat**

Työharjoittelu, Kansainvälinen Työharjoittelu, Kansainvälinen Rekrytointi, Lahjakkuuden Hallinta, Työnanatajakuvan Kehittäminen ja Hallinta

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# **1. Introduction**

As the business environment gets more global, many new international opportunities for companies have appeared. However, globalization also presents many challenges to companies such as interacting in different languages and with people of different cultural backgrounds. Thus, the need for an internationally experienced workforce has increased tremendously. This was mentioned by Andrews et al (2008) who found that companies require executives with global business capabilities.

Indeed, some of this international experience can already be gained during university studies through an international internship which is a time period of practical work outside of a student's home country. Including an international internship as a mandatory part of a curriculum is important in providing students with a real life professional learning experience and in integrating them in an organization's culture and processes in an international setting (CEMS homepage). Therefore, an increasing amount of companies is providing graduate and undergraduate students with these international opportunities and the interest to gain international experience has likewise increased among students (Collings et al, 2007). This topic has been mainly researched in the U.S. (Chapel, 1998; Adler & Loughrin-Sacco, 2003), from the perspective of the business schools and quite surprisingly, very rarely from the company point of view. This means that neither business strategies behind international internship programs nor company expectations towards interns are discussed in the existing literature.

Many companies have realized the importance of networks with universities and the students in recruiting talented future employees as well as the importance of international experience. Among these companies are the multinational companies (MNCs) that are part of the Community of European Management Schools (CEMS) network together with leading business schools. CEMS network is a strategic alliance whose first mission is to set a global standard of excellence for pre-experience Master's in management and prepare its alumnus for international careers (CEMS MIM student guide, anon., 2009). Therefore, international internships are currently a mandatory part of the CEMS MIM degree curriculum and most of the CEMS



corporate partners provide students with international internship opportunities. The main objective of the international internship is to turn academic experience and theoretical knowledge into a professional, multi-cultural experience (CEMS MIM student guide, anon., 2009).

This study aims to contribute to the knowledge of international internship programs by using a multi method research approach to gain understanding of how and why these international internship programs are organized and what are the benefits for all the stakeholders in the CEMS community. In order to gain understanding on the practical implications of the international internship programs, the focus is also on defining the roles of the different stakeholders during the internship process.

### ***1.1. Reasons for choosing the topic***

The reason why the topic was chosen was the researcher's interest in HR issues regarding the phenomenon of international internships. The researcher herself is a CEMS MIM student and has completed an international internship that was implemented at Shell International B.V. in the Netherlands. The topic was perceived important knowing that an international internship is a mandatory part of the CEMS MIM degree curriculum, which is a joint master degree in international management which can be studied in Helsinki School of Economics, Finland.

During the internship the interest towards the topic increased and the possibility to further research this phenomenon appeared in a form of perceived gap in the existing literature as well as the support received from the CEMS office in Helsinki School of Economics. The final research topic and questions were based on the thorough review of existing literature as well as the areas of the researcher's personal interest within the topic.

## ***1.2. The problem statement***

International internships are traditionally approached from the student's and university's perspectives in the existing literature (Chapel, 1998; Adler & Loughrin-Sacco, 2003; Campell Clark, 2003; Gault et al, 2000). In other words, the educational value of internships in general and their benefits in students' future career search is discussed by the scholars (Campell Clark, 2003; Gault et al, 2000). The current theory on internships has its roots in U.S. based business schools and the issues in organizing internship programs have been studied mainly from their perspective (Chapel, 1998; Adler & Loughrin-Sacco, 2003). MNCs are an important counterparty in organizing these internship programs as they offer the student with the project and work environment where the internship in reality is accomplished.

Even though it is agreeable that MNCs are an important counterparty in the international internships, the manner in which they manage these internship programs is rarely discussed in the existing literature. Currently, the theory concentrates on organizing international internship programs in universities (Chapel, 1998; Adler & Loughrin-Sacco, 2003) and structuring internships in the organizations (Sessions, 2007; Messner, 1999). However, no attention has been paid to how MNCs organize and manage their internship programs. Sparrow et al (2004) discussed international assignments in organizations and mentioned that a geocentric approach is becoming the most common way to manage these assignments. Perlmutter (1969) introduced the term geocentricism as a world wide mindset of an MNC. In regards to personnel policy, this world wide mindset means that '*we should bring in the best man in the world regardless of his nationality*' (Perlmutter, 1969, 14). This means that the employees are recruited in rather global than local basis and thus normally the responsibility of a global HR department. Could the global approach for recruitment and managing international assignments also be applicable for international internship programs or are they managed mainly in local basis?

Many scholars (Henry et al, 2001; Campell Clark, 2003; Divine et al, 2007) have stated benefits that MNCs, university and students achieve via internships. However, benefits related to specifically international internships are discussed vaguely. In addition, the drivers behind MNCs' decision to provide students with international internships are not represented in the

existing theory. Due to the international nature of the internship programs, it is assumed that they are characterized with higher costs than the local internship programs and thus it would be interesting to know, what the motivation in investing into these programs is. Is it possible purely talent attraction or are there other possible strategic drivers in launching these international internship programs?

In order to achieve the benefits related to an international internship programs, it is important to understand the international internship from a holistic perspective. In other words, what are the roles of different stakeholders in the recruitment and completion phase of an international internship? What do different stakeholders expect from each other during the process and how would they define a desirable internship outcome? In order to discuss the roles and the expectations in the different phases of the international internship, the internship is conceptualized as a process consisting of three phases; before the internship, during the internship and internship outcomes.

### **1.2.1. Research questions**

Briefly, the research object of this thesis is to understand why and how international internships are organized.

The first research question will focus on how the international internship programs are organized and managed:

*R1: How are international internship programs organized?*

In order to understand why international internship programs exist, it is interesting to look into different motivations each stakeholder has in these programs. More specifically, what are the strategic goals MNCs have behind providing students with international internships and what are the benefits for students and universities. Therefore, the second research question is:

*R2: What are the motivations of each stakeholder for international internship programs?*

In order to understand the concept of international internship more holistically, international internships are conceptualized as a process consisting of three phases; before the internship, during the internship and internship outcomes. The third research question focuses on the roles and expectations of each stakeholder in each phase of the internship process. For example, in order to understand the before the internship phase which mainly consists of recruitment and selection, it is important to know who MNCs are trying to attract with their internship programs and what the role of the university is in coordinating the internship offers. In during the internship phase, it is interesting to look into what MNCs expect from the interns while they are employed in an internship position and what is the role of the university during the internship. To complete the picture, it is also interesting to look into what students expect from an internship provider.

*R3: What are the roles and expectations of each stakeholder in international internship programs in different phases of the internship process?*

### **1.3. Definitions**

This section will define the key concepts of this research to enable the reader to understand what is meant when a certain term is used in the thesis.

#### **1.3.1. Internship**

Gault et al. (2000) defined internship as being a real work life experience where a student is able to put theory in to the practice in a real business environment. Also, Campell Clark (2003) defined internships as “real-world learning experiences” that also provide educational value. Di-Lorenzo and Mathinsen (in Gault et al., 2000) define internship as constituting of specified number of work hours, being either paid or unpaid, being credited in students curricula and being implemented in cooperation with faculty coordinator. In this thesis the term internship is used to describe a short-term employment in a company that is normally characterized by training the student how to apply theory in practice in a real work environment. The internship can be part-time or full-time employment in a company and it is mostly recognized as a part of a university curriculum. In this thesis, the term *internship* is used when internships are discussed in general whereas term *international internship* is used when specifically international internships are discussed.

#### **1.3.2. International Internship**

Adler & Loughrin-Sacco (2003) defined international internship as an internship accomplished in either student’s home country in an international company and within an international project or abroad. The term international internship is used in this thesis exclusively to refer to an internship which is done *outside of student’s home country* (Chapel, 1998). Other typical characteristics for international internship are: exposure to international business environment (Adler & Loughrin-Sacco, 2003) and exposure to cultural differences (Chapel, 1998).

#### **1.3.3. Internship process**

This thesis conceptualizes international internship as a process consisting of three phases; before the internship, during the internship and internship outcomes. Before the internship phase consists of selection of interns and university’s role in the recruitment phase. During the

internship phase consists of university's role during the completion of an internship as well as MNCs' expectations towards interns' performance and interns' expectations towards the MNC during the internship. The last phase includes the desired outcomes of an internship program from the perspective of all the three stakeholders in an internship process; university, MNC and the student. This approach is adopted in this research in order to understand the roles and expectations of each stakeholder in the different phases of the internship.

### **1.3.4. Multinational Company (MNC)**

Multinational in this paper refers to multinational company (MNC). The existing literature has many definitions of the multinational company. Pagell & Halperin (1999) summarize different definitions and state that an MNC is a company that owns and controls activities outside of its home country as well as gains 'significant' portion of its turnover from its over seas operations. This definition is accepted and utilized also in this thesis. Terms multinational enterprise (MNE) and transnational company or corporation (TNC) in the current international business literature have the same meaning as a MNC. However, this thesis will only use the term MNC.

### ***1.4. Scope and limitations of the study***

This thesis will approach the concept of international internship from a holistic perspective which means that the perspectives of all the three stakeholders; a university, a student and an MNC are discussed. In order to describe and understand the concept holistically, an international internship is conceptualized as a process consisting of three phases: before the internship, during the internship and internship outcomes. The aim is to look into the roles and expectations of each stakeholder in the different phases of the international internship process.

The research utilizes sources from international business and human resource management as well as from educational journals and can thus be regarded as an interdisciplinary research. Internships implemented in local basis are also discussed in the literature review due to the vague existence of sources discussing exclusively international internships. Talent management and employer branding theories are discussed due the perceived importance of these theories in understanding the motivations for international internship programs.

The empirical part will only concentrate on the different stakeholders in the CEMS network. The MNCs taking part to this research are exclusively CEMS Corporate partners, Helsinki School of Economics whose representative is interviewed for this research is an Academic partner of the network and the researcher herself is a CEMS MIM student. The CEMS MIM network was chosen as a source of empirical data due to the access to different stakeholders which was enabled by the support of the CEMS MIM office in Helsinki School of Economics as well as the CEMS MIM headquarters in Paris. The researcher also utilizes her own experiences and observations from an internship which was implemented at Shell International B.V. which is also a CEMS Corporate partner.

This study concentrates on researching international internships in MNCs in general and does not discuss the possible differences in internship practices which may occur due to the nature of a certain industry or country of origin of an MNC. This decision was made because of the low number of questionnaire respondents which did not enable reliable comparison between MNCs from different countries or industries. Also, the existing literature has not discussed different internship practices caused by the different industries or country of origins.

The main limitation of this study is the low number of respondents for the questionnaire. However, this was compensated by using interviews and the questionnaire together when interpreting the empirical data in order to achieve reliable conclusions. This method is called triangulation (Jick, 1979) and it is recommended in the situation where the existing theory of the research topic is rather vague as in the case of the theory on international internships.

### ***1.5. Structure of the thesis***

This thesis will be divided into five main chapters. It starts by introducing research problem and questions as well as the key concepts handled in this research. Secondly, it will review literature on international internships. This is done by using the research questions as a guideline: Section 2.2. seeks to answer the first research question by discussing the existing literature on organizing internships and Section 2.3. discusses different motivations for international internship programs and thus aims to find an answer for the second research question. Finally, Section 2.4. discusses

international internship as a process and seeks to find what has been written of the roles and expectations of each stakeholder in different internship phases and therefore contributes to the third research question. After the literature review, research methods are presented and findings are discussed. Also the findings are discussed using the order of the research questions as a guideline for structuring the chapter. The last chapter will present conclusions, managerial implications and the possible future research directions for the topic.



## 2. Literature Review

In this part, Internships in the existing literature are discussed. The chapter is structured according to the sequence of the three research questions presented in the previous chapter. After introducing internships in the existing theory, issues regarding organizing international internships are discussed. This part aims to answer the first research question on how international internships are organized in organizations. Secondly, the following section will focus on benefits of internship programs after which talent attraction and employer branding theories are reflected with the research topic. These two parts aim to provide with an explanation for the second research question on what are the motivations of different stakeholders in participating international internship programs. Thirdly, in order to understand the practical implications on internships and hence answer the third research question, international internship is conceptualized as a process consisting of before the internship phase, during the internship phase and internship outcomes and the different phases are discussed based on the existing theory. Finally, a theoretical framework for the research topic is presented and the chapter is summarized.

### 2.1. *Internship*

The term *internship* is taken from the medical profession, which has been training physicians using internships for more than one hundred years (McCollum & Schoening, 2004). Henry et al (2001) define internships as work-based, educational experiences that require cooperation of academic programs, employers and students to be successful. Koehler (1979) in McCollum & Schoening (2004, 907) defines an internship as, '*One component of a student's educational preparation for a career. It is an outside of class learning situation. The student is placed directly in the field with a veteran practitioner as his mentor*'. Gault et al (2000) have looked further into the concept of an internship and divided internship characteristics into four criteria that are, specific number of work hours, the work may be paid or unpaid, credit is awarded, and oversight is provided by faculty coordinator or other university representative and a corporate counterpart.

In conclusion, internships are practical work-based experiences that enable a company to have “fresh” and somewhat inexpensive workforce and provide students with useful experience from their field of interest. The next paragraph will discuss *business internships* more specifically to understand the difference in regards to internships in general.

### **2.1.1. Business Internship**

McCollum & Schoening (2004, 908) differentiate business internships from other disciplines in a following manner: *‘The use of internships in business firms in the United States has taken a different direction from that found in the medical or public administration fields. In those professions, interns are supposed to learn what a practitioner does on the job and thus give the intern practical experience. While such an experience is also an important part of business internships, the greater interest is in using the method as a means of recruiting talented business school seniors. In that respect, the internship program is like that in the legal profession where promising law students are invited to intern in law firms after completing their second year.’* The definition is congruent with Gault et al (2000) findings of business internships, show that in a variety of fields, internships give the students advantages in the job market because studies have shown that graduates who have accomplished internships are given more job interviews, more job offers, and are offered higher salaries than students who do not have internship training during their university studies.

Campbell Clark (2003, 473) discussed the real use of business internships as follows: *‘From a cynical point of view, internships have pragmatic benefits that sometimes draw more attention than their educational value: Business schools generate tuition income with a minimal commitment from staff, employers find and use talent cheaply or for free, and students earn credit toward graduation while building employment contacts and sometimes getting paid’.* Also Divine et al (2007) argue that primary reason for the popularity of internships is that they offer *‘win-win-win opportunities’* for students, employers and schools. Students benefit from internships because the professional work experience enhances their employability, employers get access to potential future employees, and schools benefit from them because it helps to strengthen their connections to the business community.

However, Campell Clark (2003) also pinpointed that the educational value of business internships should not be ignored. She researched how academic assignments implemented during a business internship could enhance the educational value and the intern's learning. Her conclusion was that several academic assignments that reflect the practical work will help the student to gain further understanding of the business environment and learn to learn from a real-life work experience.

In conclusion, according to McCollum & Schoening (2004) the main difference between business internship and the internships implemented in other disciplines is the aim for companies' to use internships as a recruitment tool. However, Divine et al (2007) also mention that internships are efficient tools for achieving contingent workforce for a peak load periods. Another obvious character that differentiates business internships from other disciplines is the nature of the projects students are working with during their internships. The projects business students are typically involved are related to their field of studies which could be anything from finance and economics to business communication.

### **2.1.2. International Internship**

Adler & Loughrin-Sacco (2003) define international internship as the intern either working in an international company in U.S. or abroad. Their study concentrated on defining the international internship program launched within San Diego State University's undergraduate international business program. The study defined challenges in finding an international internship position for all the students as well as some ways to overcome these challenges. It was also stated that the alumni of the university found that the international internship enhanced their employability due to improved language and cultural skills.

Chapel (1998) has discussed the role of a faculty advisor as an important mediator in international internship success of the student. He states that an international internship is a key requisite for a graduate student aspiring toward a global business career. According to him, possessing a keen sensitivity and understanding of cultural uniqueness and then being immersed

into an environment with differing values and world views are valuable experiences for future success in international business. The key mediator for the success is in Chapel's (1998) opinion the faculty intern advisor, who should be responsible for educating the student regarding the cultural differences in the new environment in order to guarantee the successful internship outcome. Chapel (1998) also extracts cultural understanding and language skills as an important character of international internships.

Large portion of the studies regarding business internships is approached from the student's perspective. For instance Gault et al (2000) researched the relation between undergraduate internships and career success and found internships during the studies enhancing student's future employability and Henry et al (2001) focused on researching congruency between student interns and worksite supervisor's regarding critical elements of an internship experience. Campell Clark (2003) on the other hand researched how student's learning can be enhanced during the internship and suggested implementing academic assignments during the business internship in order to enhance the educational value of an internship. All these scholars have mentioned several benefits that an organization perceives in providing students with internships. These benefits will be discussed more in depth in the Section 2.3.

## ***2.2. Organizing international internships***

The first research question concentrates on how international internships are organized in MNCs. Thus the existing literature related to this topic is reviewed in this chapter. Currently, the research concentrates on organizing international internship programs in universities (Chapel, 1998; Adler & Loughrin-Sacco, 2003) and structuring internships in the organizations (Sessions, 2007; Messner, 1999). In addition, Cambel Clark (2003) has discussed adding academic elements to business internships in order to enhance their educational value.

Collins & Davidson (2002, in Adler & Loughrin-Sacco, 2003) researched management of international internship programs from university's perspective and agreed that developing internship programs is even more difficult in international education due to the complexity in allocating students to international assignments. Chapel (1998) has researched university's role in organizing international internship program and mentioned that especially cultural training is

essential in succeeding in these programs and thus training in the topic should be enhanced prior to the internship.

Sessions (2007, 22) stated that *'Successful internships require a tremendous amount of commitment and energy by firms'*. He wrote about organizing internships in organizations in general and revealed also the importance of a clearly defined, meaning full tasks. When describing the internship program in an accounting firm, Sessions (2007, 12) stated: *We make sure that interns have a variety of challenging and interesting assignments. Our philosophy is that interns should have a meaningful and rich learning experience. Interns will usually work in one discipline for the duration of the internship.*

The goal for the internship program described by Sessions (2007) was for the interns to turn into 60-70% of the company's entry level candidates. In order to ensure this, it was perceived important that the intern would work on a real, well defined project or tasks. Also, Messner (1999) highlighted the importance of internships as a recruitment tool when he discussed internships in accounting firms and stated that careful planning of the tasks and projects was an important character in making the internship program successful.

None of the scholars have studied how the international internship programs are managed in the organizations or whether the organizations are administrating the internship programs on local or global basis. In regards to international assignments in general, Sparrow et al (2004) have mentioned that the current trend in MNCs is to take a geocentric approach to organizing them where MNC's global HR department is responsible for planning and organizing the international assignments. Geocentric approach was introduced by Perlmutter (1969) and is also called a global approach. In regards to recruitment policy, geocentric approach means that employees are hired from all over the world based on their competencies, not on their nationality, whereas in an ethnocentric approach, the citizens of company's home country are preferred when recruiting new employees (Perlmutter, 1969). It can be assumed that if a company implements geocentric approach in its HR policies, it also organizes the international internship program in a geocentric manner. To some extent, it can be assumed that in the geocentric approach to organizing

internships, the internship programs are administrated and managed by the global HR instead of each subsidiary being responsible of their own internship programs. The ways in which MNCs arrange their internship programs will be discussed more in depth in the empirical part of this research.

To conclude, current literature mainly focuses on issues faced by the university in organizing international internship programs or describing the importance of the interesting nature of an internship project in regards to internships in general. It can be agreed, that there is an obvious lack in research in how MNCs organize their internship programs. Geocentric approach was discussed as a possible way in which organizations manage their internship programs; however, as the literature on this topic was rather vague, the topic will be discussed more thoroughly in the empirical part of this research.

### ***2.3. Motivations for international internship programs***

The second research question focuses on the motivations for international internship programs. More broadly, it focuses on finding why MNCs have started to provide students with international internships as well as why students are interested in these opportunities. Additionally, the focus is also on university's benefits in these internship programs and to understand the motivations for establishing international internship programs, it is important to discuss the benefits of all these stakeholders. Especially international internship programs are not broadly discussed in the existing literature as mentioned earlier. Hence, the benefits of internship programs in general are also discussed in this part. Secondly, to gain more understanding of especially MNCs goals for international internship programs, talent management and employer branding are reflected with the topic.

#### **2.3.1. Benefits of an international internship program**

Divine et al (2007) discussed the benefits of an internship program from the point of view of all stakeholders and listed the following benefits for students: work experience that strengthens resume, better understanding of the world of work, better base for adjustment to the work environment, learning about work in a guided and mentored environment, opportunity to see the application of academic concepts, ability to bring 'real world' experiences into subsequent

classes and to share those with other students, improved job-related skills, better preparation for post-graduation job, clarification of career goals and increased marketability compared to students without internships. In addition to these benefits, McCollum & Schoening, (2004) also mentioned enhanced employability after graduation as one of the advantages of an internship program.

Adler & Loughrin-Sacco (2003) discussed benefits related to a specific international internship program implemented in San Diego State university and stated that an international internship was a very beneficial tool in determining the field students want to pursue their career after graduation. In addition, in their research, 79 percent of the participants in this international internship program had reported improved likelihood of finding a job after the internship. In addition to the benefits perceived by students, Adler & Loughrin-Sacco (2003) also noted that for the university, the program was very successful in creating strong, long lasting ties with the business community.

Also, Divine et al (2007) and Gault (2000) mentioned universities' strengthened business connection as a benefit of internship programs. Other benefits for the university Divine et al (2007) listed as increased enrollment to the degree program as students recognize the competitive advantage the internship provides and enhanced reputation of the program compared to programs that do not require internships. Campell Clark (2003) has also mentioned the enhanced reputation of a business school as a benefit of the internships. However, she states that the reputation is enhanced due to the better placement of university's alumnus which occurs due to enhanced career future perspectives for those students who have done an internship.

Benefits perceived by companies Divine et al (2007) listed as: source of qualified, low cost, motivated workers, opportunity to evaluate potential long-term employees without long-term commitment, source of employees for peak load periods, and strengthened relations with business schools. Moroko and Uncles' (2008) on the other hand state that strengthened relations with business schools are an efficient tool in long-term recruitment and thus it can be agreed that

one of the benefits of internship programs to MNCs is the relatively low cost recruitment channel.

Also Sessions (2007, 22) mentioned improved relations with universities as an important tool in the long term recruitment scheme. In addition, he mentioned the advantages in gaining valuable future employees using of former interns: *'Interns who join the firm after graduation are immediately more valuable to the firm. Relationships are improved with the universities, which helps in long-term recruiting goals. Interns also make great sales people for your firm. Even in the event that they have not accepted full time employment, if they have had a good experience within your organization, they will tell their classmates. A good internship program can provide a very strong foundation for a firm's long term recruiting plan.'* Additionally, Cupps and Olmosk (2008) studied public sector internships and noted that the main benefit of them is that the organization receives an enthusiastic, reasonably experienced human resource, generally without much financial obligation or long-term commitment.

In conclusion, there are various benefits in organizing both; internship programs in general and international internships. Presumably, many of the benefits apply to both, international and local internship programs, however, characters related to international nature of the internship may provide with additional benefits to all the stakeholders. It can be agreed, that even though benefits of the internship programs in general are to some extent handled in the existing literature, there is an obvious gap in explaining the strategic goals companies have for launching specifically international programs. These strategic goals will be researched more in depth in the empirical part of this research as well as in the next section, where the topic is discussed from the talent management and employer branding perspective.

### **2.3.2. Talent Management and employer branding**

As indicated in the previous section, internships are used to some extent to gain talented new workforce. Therefore, it was perceived important to discuss international internships from talent management and employer branding perspectives and look into these theories more in depth. In this part, literature on both; talent management and employer branding is discussed and reflected with especially international internships.



### 2.3.3. Talent management

Already Schneider (1987) wrote about the importance of the right people for the organization. He developed the attraction-selection-attrition framework which showed that in reality, people are the most important factors in determining if the company will become successful in the future. Also, according to more recent researches, (Minnesch, 2006; Sparrow et al, 2004 etc.) it is essential for the company to acquire the capable people, which will determinate whether or not the company is successful in the future. Recruitment of these future employees is a risky task and therefore much research and planning is required. Effectively managed staff is also said to be comfortable within the organization and usually believe they own the business. A study conducted by PricewaterhouseCoopers (2008) stated that the ability to anticipate talent needs and optimize talented workforce is a key to a company's sustainable competitive advantage.

Chhabra and Mishra (2008) state that the main purpose of a company's HR function is to obtain, retain and develop employees. For a company to function efficiently, it is important that the people with the best fit with the company are recruited. According to Chhabra and Mishra (2008) the best people can be found using several talent management and attraction strategies such as employer branding which will be discussed more in depth in the paragraph 2.3.3.

Capelli (2008, 76) describes the optimal manner for designing talent management using supply chain management as an example: *“It's time for a fundamentally new approach to talent management that takes into account the great uncertainty businesses face today. Fortunately, companies already have such a model, one that has been well honed over decades to anticipate and meet demand in uncertain environments – supply chain management. By borrowing lessons from operations and supply chain research, firms can forge a new model of talent management better suited to today's realities.”*

By referring to supply chain management Capelli (2008) wants to enhance the importance in predicting the future demand for talented workforce and ensuring the supply on the other hand. Large amount of MNCs have realized the importance of the topic and thus most of the

companies nowadays have introduced talent management programs as a part of their strategic human resource management .

In addition to the attraction of future talents, Chhabra and Mishra (2008) also state that talent management should go beyond talent attraction and also take into account the importance of employee retention. Keeping retention rates high ensures lower employee turnover and ensures that the knowledge is not lost. Interestingly, internship programs also seem to be a good tool for increasing the employee retention through increased commitment: According to the National Association of Colleges and Employers' research more than one-third (37%) of employers surveyed reported higher retention in the first year of hire among former interns than their full-time colleagues who did not go through their internship program. Five years after hire, nearly half (49%) said former interns had higher retention (2008).

To conclude, talent management is seen essential for company's success and many scholars have written about the issue. Talent management consists of both; employee attraction and retention. It was noted, that internship programs may guarantee higher employee retention rates for the company and it is also assumed that they work as a strategy to attract talented employees for the organization. How this is done is discussed more thoroughly in the next paragraph when the literature on talent attraction strategies is reviewed.

#### **2.3.4. Talent attraction strategies**

As discussed in the previous paragraph, talent attraction plays an important role in sustaining company's competitive advantage. It was found relevant already in the late 1980's when many company representatives started to get concerned with the future supply of qualified employees (e.g. Finley, 1989 and Bernstein, 1987 in Rynes & Barber 1990) It is also important taking into account the phenomenon of labor shortage that many researchers have predicted to occur during the 21<sup>st</sup> century (Rynes & Barber, 1990; Chhabra and Mishra, 2008). The labor shortage will cause the companies to find it challenging to find enough qualified labor due to the retirement of large generations.

This part will look into the attraction strategies described in the talent management literature from both; organizational and applicants' perspective, the next part will follow by discussing

employer branding more in depth. To conclude, international internships are discussed from the talent attraction and employer branding perspective.

Rynes & Barber (1990) discuss talent attraction from the organizational point of view. Their framework suggests that, contradictory to some previous beliefs, efficient recruitment is not the only tool for attracting applicants. The framework divides attracting strategies into three categories:

- *Recruitment Practices*
- *Employment inducements*
- *Applicant pools*

By recruitment practices Rynes & Barber (1999) refer to general aspects of the recruitment process such as the impact of organizational representatives as well as messages, timing and sources used in the recruitment process. The second category refers to the attributes related to the job such as benefits, improved salary or introduced flextime. However, it is mentioned that any attribute related to the job can be regarded as an employment inducement. By enhancing these attributes, it is assumed that more applicants will find the employer attractive. The attractiveness of a single attribute varies and it has been found for instance that the high performing applicants are more attracted by career development and promotion opportunities than monetary inducements (Rynes & Barber, 1999).

Collings et al (2007) state that increasing number of employees nowadays perceive the value of the international assignment in developing individual competence which can be transferred across organizations and which is valued in the external labor market. Thus, among other inducements, possibility to gain international experience in a form of international internship program could be perceived as one type of an employment inducement strategy of an MNC. Hence, it is reasonable to assume that by providing students with international career opportunities MNCs are aiming to attract more qualified and talented applicants.

The third attracting strategy in the framework, applicant pools, refers to expanding the recruitment scheme to reach so called “non-traditional” applicants. This means that the company

approaches less marketable applicants such as marginal groups of people (e.g. people with disabilities) that the competitors might have ignored in their recruitment processes. (Rynes & Barber, 1999) Also, if this strategy is viewed from the perspective of international internship programs, it can be agreed that if a company hires people from all around the world, instead of for example only from its home country, it receives a larger applicant pool and can therefore choose its interns from a global talent pool.

Ehrhart and Ziegert (2005) have studied applicant attraction from the applicants' perspective and introduced three different metatheories that determinate why an individual applicant is attracted to an organization. These metatheories are:

- *Environment Processing Metatheory*
- *Interactionist Processing Metatheory*
- *Self-Processing Metatheory*

Environment processessing metatheory suggests that applicants use information they have about the environment as signals of the perceived environment. These signals are normally messages given by the organizations. The information is perceived individually and thus different applicants may hold very different views of the organization. On the other hand, interactionist metatheory suggests that the fit between individuals and environments contributes to attraction. In practice the perceived fit can be either objective or subjective. Perceived subjective fit refers to individual's perception of the work place and his/her fit with it whereas objective fit refers to individual's actual needs and organization's capability to satisfy these needs. One type of "actual need" can for instance be the location of the work place. Self-Processessing metatheory has its foundation in social psychology. It approaches the relation between subjective fit and attraction from the perspective of attitudes about individual's self. (Ehrhart and Ziegert, 2005)

In conclusion, talent attraction can be viewed from either organizational or applicant's perspective. However, both perspectives provide insight into why some organizations are more attractive than others. Rynes & Barber's (1999) model provided an insight of how the attractiveness can be enhanced whereas Ehrhart and Ziegert (2005) concentrate on how the

organizational attractiveness is viewed from individual's perspective. In order to implement applicant attraction in an organization, it is important to understand both perspectives.

At last, Chhabra and Mishra (2008) state that employer branding is an efficient tool for talent attraction and long term recruitment in MNCs. It will be discussed more in depth in the next part of this literature review. Finally, the center piece of this study, international internships, is discussed from the applicant attraction point of view.

### **2.3.5. Employer branding**

Chhabra and Mishra (2008, 57) have defined employer brand in the following way: *“A ‘good company tag’ is critical to a company’s ability to attract, motivate and retain the best and the brightest, thus gaining competitive advantage in the marketplace. Internationally, those companies that are voted as ‘Best Companies to Work For’ also yield higher returns for shareholders. Employer branding is the process of creating an identity and managing the company’s image in its role as an employer. An organization brand lives in the minds of its customers—its employees. The customers may have positive or negative association with the brand.”*

In other words, employer brand is the image that the applicant has of the organization. Moroko and Uncles’ (2008, 163) studied characteristics of successful employer brands. They stated that: *company with a successful employer brand has the conscious awareness of what is actually of value to its people and why, carries through on that with action, and effectively supports this with communication.* Moroko and Uncles’ (2008) stated that employer brand is not only a mere form of management buzz words, but rather something concrete that have to be maintained with efficient communication. They found that successful employer brands were characterized by three main aspects that also apply for ordinary brands:

- *Being known and noticeable*
- *Being seen as relevant and resonant*
- *Being differentiated from direct competitors*

The first success criterion refers to the common marketing belief that if the consumers are not aware of the brand, it is unlikely that there will be a purchase. The same is applicable for the employer brand. Thus it is important for the brand to be known and noticed among potential future employees. The second criterion refers to the fact that a purchase occurs only if brands value proposition is seen as relevant to the consumers. In the context of employer branding, the purchase is a metaphor for the interest the person has towards applying for a certain company. For employer brands ‘consumers’ are existing as well as prospective employees for whom a distinct value proposition applies (Moroko and Uncles, 2008).

In regards to the research topic of this thesis, international internships, it can be agreed that providing international career opportunities will enhance the international image of the employer brand and thus attract employees who relate to this value proposition. As mentioned by Collings et al (2007), an increasing amount of employees nowadays perceive the value of the international assignment as developing individual competence which can be transferred across organizations, which is valued in the external labor market. Thus it can be agreed that building an international employer brand may attract an increasing amount of prospective employees.

The third criterion of a successful employer brand is that it is differentiated from its direct competitors. This according to Moroko and Uncles (2008) is a key in winning the ‘war for talent’. In addition to these success criteria Moroko and Uncles (2008) also identified two characteristics of an successful employer brand that are not applicable for ordinary brands which thus differentiate the employer brand from an ordinary one. These characteristics are:

- *Fulfilling a psychological contract*
- *Unintended appropriation of brand values*

The characteristics are derived from the different nature of the employer brand in comparison to an ordinary brand. Fulfilling a psychological contract refers to the requirement for an employer brand that it is communicated accurately to the prospective employees as well as consistently delivering on the inherent promise of the brand. The importance in keeping the employee satisfied after starting on the job as well as the difficulty in comparing different brands differentiate the employer brand from ordinary brands.

In conclusion, international internships work as an employer branding tool in two ways; Firstly, before the intern is selected for the internship program, and secondly, during the internship program. Before the student is selected for the program, offering international internships signals the international nature of the company and thus attracts internationally minded students because they will perceive the value proposition of the brand important for them. During the internship the employer brand is enhanced on the other hand if the student is satisfied in the internship position.

### **2.3.6. Talent management and international internships**

As discussed in this chapter, the need for structured talent management and attraction programs has emerged due to the need for talented workforce and currently occurring labor shortage. As defined by Capelli (2008), talent management resembles supply chain management in a way that it concentrates on predicting the demand and ensuring the supply. Ensuring the supply in the context of talent management can for instance be implemented via employer branding and talent attraction strategies.

From the perspective of talent management, it can be assumed that providing possibilities for international experience from the very beginning of the employment can be regarded as an employment inducement strategy which aims to attract more talented applicants. Also Ehrhart and Ziegert (2005) stated that the signals sent by the MNC are a crucial aspect from the applicant attraction point of view due to the fact that they determinate whether the applicant feels attracted to the organization in the first place. Therefore, it can be assumed that one strategic goal for MNCs to provide international internship is to attract more talented applicants.

From the employer branding point of view it can be concluded that providing students with international opportunities enhances the global brand of the company. By providing international opportunities, the company profiles itself as a truly multinational employer with international career opportunities. It may also create more recognition for the employer brand if the internships are offered globally.

Another conclusion that can be drawn based on this part is that providing students with international internships is a tool for enhancing MNCs' employer brand. This works in two

ways; firstly, by offering students with international opportunities the company establishes itself as truly multinational career path provider and may create more recognition of the company's brand. Secondly, employer branding is also done during the internship and keeping the intern satisfied throughout the internship is crucial for sustaining a successful employer brand.

However, even though these conclusions can be drawn combining and analyzing the literature, it can not be stated that internships are exclusively a talent attraction tool for MNCs. This is due to the fact that internships are also to some extent used as a source of labor for peak load periods (Divine et al, 2007). This is not derived from talent attraction as such because talent attraction aims to rather identify and attract potential future employees using international internships (Chhabra and Mishra, 2008) than using internships simply as a source of contingent workforce. Therefore it could be argued, that talent attraction approach to international internships is more of a long term recruitment strategy than a short-term tool for achieving contingent workforce.

Based on this section, it is assumed when analyzing the empirical data that the strategic goal for providing students with international internships is; 1) talent attraction and 2) employer branding. However, other possible goals are not excluded and thus semi structured interviews were organized to find the answer for the first research question about strategic goals MNCs have behind providing international internships opportunities.

#### ***2.4. Internship process***

The last research question focuses on the roles and the expectations of each stakeholder in international internship programs in different phases of the internship process. The internship process consists of three phases; before the internship, during the internship, and internship outcomes. In other words, this research question focuses on the roles of university, MNC, and student in all the three phases. In addition, it looks into the qualities MNCs seek in students when they recruit for the international internship programs and the qualities that an intern needs in order to be successful in a particular international internship. At last, the focus is on what is defined as a successful internship outcome from the perspective of all the three stakeholders.



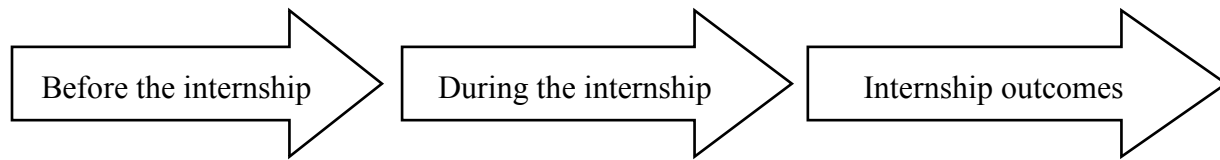


Figure 1: Internship process (Source: own contribution)

#### **2.4.1. Before the internship**

In this part, the literature on the recruitment processes for international internships as well as for internships in general is reviewed and discussed. It was found essential to find what qualities MNCs look for when recruiting an international intern. The role of the university in the recruitment process is also discussed in this part in order to contribute to the knowledge of the different roles and expectations in this phase of the internship process.

International recruitment and selection has been a popular topic in the international human resource management, where it is argued by many scholars (Black et al, 1999; Dowling, 2008) that the right people are the key for a company's success. Selecting the right people from the very beginning of the recruitment process is the key to success and it can be agreed that the careful selection of interns is essential for MNCs in order to guarantee the correct match between the position and the employee.

Adler & Loughrin-Sacco (2003, 5) discussed the role of the San Diego State University in finding suitable internship positions for their students in international internship program: *The program's mission is not to find students their jobs, but rather to educate international business students about the nature of one or more potential careers. Students begin by going through exercises to identify not only the type of work they would like to pursue (e.g., marketing or management), but also target industries of interest. They work with their professor to identify correct contacts in companies of interest... Feedback on resumes is provided; e.g., internship resumes often list students, skills rather than their work history (given that companies know a priori that interns have little or no work experience.) Feedback to students on interview skills is also necessary, since few interns will have experience with interviewing.*

The idea behind the international internship program at San Diego State University is that the university acts as a facilitator and advisor rather than a job coordinator in the recruitment phase. The importance of in depth career planning from an early phase is highlighted and university's role as a guide in this process was found very important. (Adler & Loughrin-Sacco, 2003)

Also Chapel (1998, 97) discussed the selection phase of international internships from the point of view of university's career advisor. He stated: *'Ideally, intern candidates should meet potential corporate sponsors prior to selection. These sessions help determine a candidate's motivation and preparation for a specific international posting and allow the corporate sponsor to evaluate a candidate's international communication competence and functional expertise. In addition, candidates should respond to various questionnaires and preparation checklists that are then evaluated by the advisor and potential corporate sponsor.'*

It can be agreed that Chapel (1998) found especially international communication competence and functional expertise as important qualities to determine whether a person is suitable for a certain international internship position. The literature on companies' selection process for specifically international internship program is not excessive and there is no evidence in the current theory on which qualities companies look for when recruiting an international intern. Therefore, this topic will be covered more in depth in the empirical part of this study.

Because the internship is of international nature, it can be assumed that qualities mentioned in the literature of desired expatriation qualities may apply to the qualities of international interns that companies look for when recruiting to their international internship programs. Most common qualities mentioned in the literature on expatriate selection are: interpersonal skills (Bennet et al, 2000), cross-cultural & communication skills (Sparrow et al, 2004) and cultural awareness, language knowledge (verbal and nonverbal) as well as motivation, ability to recognize and manage cultural uniqueness (Chapel 1998). Matherly (2005) stated that when employing graduates for international organizations, managers rated ability to work well in different cultures very high whereas language skills as such were not found essential. However, her study was conducted in U.S. and the importance of the language skills, especially in English, in companies based in small and medium sized markets is very high.

In conclusion, university's role in the recruitment phase is to prepare the students to find the right career direction and advise the student on how to achieve internship positions. University's role is not to coordinate the offers or find suitable internship positions for their students. When it comes to the selection process in MNCs, the literature on international internships does not provide evidence on which qualities MNCs look for when recruiting an international intern. However, it is assumed based on the findings of Chapel (1998) and other scholars (Sparrow et al, 2004; Matherly, 2005; Bennet et al, 2000) who researched expatriate qualities, that the combination of desired qualities in the recruitment phase consists of functional expertise, several cross cultural communication skills as well as language skills and the right motivation for the position. In the empirical part, the importance of these qualities in MNCs recruitment for international internships is researched and discussed more in depth.

#### **2.4.2. During the internship**

In this part of the literature review, previous literature on each stakeholder's roles and expectations during the internship is discussed. The existing literature does not provide evidence on the implications related specifically to international internships, thus the literature of internships in general is used to gain better understanding on what different stakeholders expect from each other during this phase and what, if anything, is university's role during the completion of an internship.

Hall et al (1995) stated that understanding the expectations of both parties' is the most critical element for the internship success. This argument is based on the view that when these expectations match and both parties understand what they are expected to provide to the other party, implementing the internship successfully is enabled. This partly explains why the expectations of MNCs and interns are also found important in this study.

Henry et al (2001) who studied the congruency between interns' and employers' views on critical elements of an internship experience and asked students to rate the elements he called as '*worksite elements*'. These were elements outside of the academic environment that were specifically related to what students expected from and valued in an internship provider during the internship. Satisfactory work environment, nurturing/challenging environment, appropriate

work hours and adequate supervision as well as significant work were found as the five most important factors affecting the satisfaction of interns.

These findings are consistent with the findings on research made in collaboration with CEMS and L'oreal (Mayrhofer et al, 2009) about choosing a job and the first employer among CEMS students. The findings showed that students appreciated interesting, challenging and result oriented work environment. Cupps and Olmosk (2008) on the other hand mentioned that a key for planning a successful internship is to broaden the range and the significance of the tasks in an internship. Based on the findings of these scholars, it is agreeable that students expect employers to provide them with challenging and interesting tasks.

Campell Clark (2003) has suggested that the university should be involved during the internship by including academic exercises into the process to enhance intern's learning during the internship. These assignments could for instance include essays on applying the theory in practice at the workplace, learning journals or presentations of the work to peer students. However, Hall et al findings (1995) from the study where they compared student's and employers attitudes about internship, indicated employers were not fully supportive when it comes to university's involvement to the internship process in a form of academic assignments. In the research, it was asked whether the employers would support additional academic work from university's side during the internship such as academic paper and the results showed that an average company did not support the idea. This could be due to the willingness of the company to ensure that the intern is fully committed to the project or tasks provided by the company.

In conclusion, students expect to work on interesting, challenging projects while in an internship program. If the companies want to get the most out of the internship experience, they should plan the project to be significant and important and support the student in achieving the internship goals. University's role has been discussed to some extent in the previous literature; however, there is no general agreement on how much, if at all, university should be involved in the completion phase of an internship.

### 2.4.3. Internship outcomes

In this part, it is reviewed what has been discussed on desirable internship outcomes from the perspective of an MNC, a student and a university. In other words, the aim of this part is to find how a successful internship outcome is defined in the existing literature on internships.

Hawes & Kealey (1979 in Chapel, 1998) identified three components for successful completion of international assignment: (1) *intercultural interaction and training* in the host culture and the transfer of skills; (2) *professional effectiveness* related to the performance of daily tasks, duties, and responsibilities on the job; and (3) *personal/family adjustments* associated with the capacity for basic satisfaction while living abroad. Chapel (1998) assumed that these ingredients are also necessary for the successful completion of international graduate internships. Due to the short-term of an international internship and the relatively young age of the students participating in these internship programs, the researcher assumes that the third ingredient mentioned by Hawes & Kealey (1979 in Chapel, 1998) has the least importance. The first two components can be interpreted as a successful adaptation to the culture of the country where the internship is implemented and successful completion of the tasks given to the intern would enhance the perception of a successful internship outcome from the MNC point of view.

For universities, a successful outcome of an international internship is described in rather indirect and general manner: If the MNC perceives the internship outcome successful, relations with universities are seen more valuable which endures these relations. (Divine et al, 2007; Adler & Loughrin-Sacco, 2003) On the other hand, if the intern's future career success is enhanced through an internship, the reputation of the university is enhanced due to improved alumni placement (Campell Clark, 2003). The existing literature does not provide evidence on what is a definition of a successful internship outcome from university's perspective in regards to a particular internship.

Hall et al (1995) compared the attitudes of students and employers in regards to internship programs because according to him, internship will be successful if the expectations of these two

parties are congruent. However, he did not define the successfulness or the desired internship outcomes more in depth.

Many scholars have mentioned that the internships enhance students' future career opportunities (Gault et al, 2000; Campell Clark, 2003) and Adler & Loughrin-Sacco (2003) noted that an internship also helps students in deciding what they want and do not want to work with in the future. Based on these findings, it could be agreed that the internship outcome is flourishing from a student's perspective if the future career opportunities in the field of student's interest are enhanced. However, defining a successful internship from a student's perspective is a very subjective issue and thus there may be various ways to define it.

In conclusion, the admired outcome of an international internship is not a common topic in the existing literature. However, it can be interpreted that successful completion of ones tasks or project as well as adaptation to the culture of the country where the international internship is implemented are important factors for the successfulness. For the student, the definition of a successful outcome is rather subjective and depends on the individual's goals and preferences whereas the success from the university's perspective is indirectly dependent on the perceived success of other stakeholder.

## ***2.5. Theoretical framework***

The current literature on international internships is very limited and is mainly concentrated on the issues in organizing international internship programs from the university perspective. The researchers (Adler & Loughrin-Sacco, 2003; Chapel, 1998) assume that internships are a mandatory part of a study program and that the international internships are always done in cooperation with a university. However, due to the globalization and the interest to travel and gain experiences (Collings et al, 2007) this assumption may not be perfectly sound and students may seek to do international internships even when they are not a mandatory part of their curricula. The existing literature does not concentrate on organizing international internship programs in MNCs and therefore it was found important to concentrate on this part in the empirical part of the thesis. Due to the vague existing theory, literature on business internships,

internships in accounting companies as well as internships in general was utilized to gain more understanding of the topic.

Study of international internships contributes mainly to the knowledge important to the human resources function of an MNC. This study did not concentrate on a specific industry or market and thus the findings apply to wide range of MNCs. More broadly, as this study also reflected the talent management literature and the use of international internships as a talent attraction strategy, it can be agreed that the study influences a wide range of MNCs' functions. This is due to the fact that guaranteeing future supply of skilled employees is essential for the continuity of all the businesses.

Theories important to the framework of this study are obviously the theory on internships in general which has its roots in the educational discussion, and the existing theories on talent management and employer branding. Also the literature on international assignments, international recruitment and expatriate qualifications was read broadly by the researcher to gain a broad knowledge of related topics in international human resource management. Especially the literature on expatriate qualifications (Bennet et al, 2000; Sparrow et al, 2004) enhanced the researcher's understanding on what qualities MNCs may be looking for when recruiting an intern to their international internship programs. The literature on international assignments (Collings et al, 2007) on the other hand revealed interesting changes in the attitudes towards international assignments as well as the increased willingness of employees to go for international assignments.

In addition to the topics within international human resource management, part of the theory on internships was found from educational journals and sources and it is important to take into account that the topic is not purely business related, but can also be viewed from the educational perspective.

Figure 2 captures the theoretical framework of this thesis. The research questions are in the middle of the figure surrounded by the theories that were used to answer the questions. As can be interpreted from the figure; the first research question was discussed based on the literature on internships in general, theory on organizing international internships as well as literature on international assignments in general. Theories on talent management and employer branding together with literature on internships in general were used to answer research question 2 about motivations for international internships. The third research question is divided into three phases as the internship in this research is conceptualized into a process. In order to discuss the expectations of each stakeholder in the selection phase, literature on international recruitment and expatriate assignments was utilized together with the literature on internships in general. Literature on internships from both; business and educational sources was utilized also to discuss the roles and the expectations on different stakeholders in last two internship phases; during the internship and outcomes.

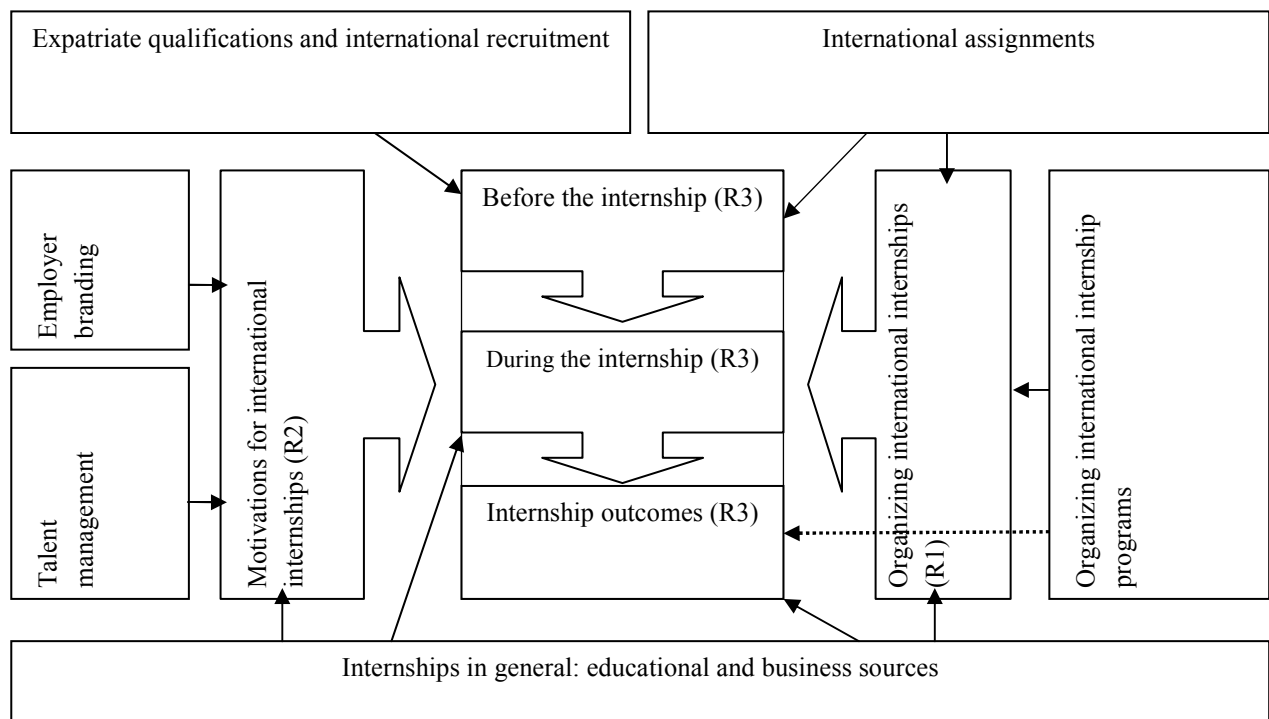


Figure 2: Theoretical framework (source own contribution)



## **2.6. *Summary***

In this chapter, the literature on international internships, internships in general and talent management as well as employer branding was reviewed to understand the concept of international internships and answer the research questions. First, the literature on internships, business internships and international internships was reviewed. After the introduction to the topic, the literature on organizing internships was reviewed. It was found that the existing theory mainly concentrates on organizing internship programs in universities, not in MNCs.

Secondly, the motivations for international internships were discussed. This was done by reviewing the literature on the benefits of internships in general. Additionally, talent management and employer branding were discussed and the existing theory was reflected with the theory on international internships. It was assumed that talent management and employer branding contribute to the motivations for MNCs to organize international internship programs.

In the third part of the literature review, internship process and its implications in recruitment, completion and post-internship phase were discussed. It was found that the literature on recruitment phase is very concentrated on describing the selection process from university's perspective. The completion phase on the other hand was mainly researched from student's and university's perspectives whereas the post internship outcomes were very generally handled by many scholars.

At last, theoretical framework for the topic was presented. It was noted that the roots of internship studies are in medical field and thereafter the topic got more researched in the field of public administration. Other theories relevant to this study are in international human resource management, talent management and employer branding as well as internship studies done in the field of educational science.

### **3. Research Methods**

In this chapter, the research methods are presented and discussed. Additionally, to guarantee the reliability of this study, detailed descriptions of procedures for the execution of the empirical investigation are presented. This study concentrates on discovering the implications of international internships from a holistic perspective. The study focuses on finding why and how international internships are organized and what are the roles and expectations of different stakeholders throughout the internship process.

#### ***3.2. Research approach***

This study seeks to understand the phenomenon of international internships in MNCs that are part of the CEMS MIM network. More specifically, it seeks to describe the phenomena and understand the roles and motivations of each stakeholder in order to complete the existing research which currently has large gaps in the area of internships from the organizational perspective. Saunders et al (2003, 96) have stated that exploratory studies are valuable in finding ‘*what is happening*’ or to ‘*find new insights; ask questions and to assess the phenomena in new light*’. In addition, they have stated that explanatory studies are suitable in describing causal relationship between variables or to answer the question ‘*Why something is happening*’. Thus, this research will combine exploratory and explanatory approach to describe how international internships are managed in the organizations and to understand the roles and motivations of each stakeholder in the internship process.

#### ***3.3. Research method***

In order to succeed in the research goal, it was found essential to choose the most suitable methods for gathering empirical data. The goal for the empirical data collection was; firstly that, in order to gain a holistic perspective from MNCs, it should reach as many CEMS Corporate partners as possible, and secondly, that the quality of the findings was found to be important in understanding the topic in a proper manner and contribute to the theory.

General classification of research methods divides them into two groups; qualitative and quantitative (Saunders, 2003). Andersen & Gamdorp (1994) argue that the fundamental differences in qualitative and quantitative are so strong that you cannot combine quantitative and qualitative methods. Another, more modern perspective, argues that there are many clear advantages in combining different methods. Gorard and Taylor (2004) even agree that a combination of methods is almost always more effective than when methods are used in isolation. The latter way of thinking is adopted in this research and therefore mixing research methods was found the most suitable method for this research.

Mixing methods is also a sound solution due to its two main advantages mentioned by Saunders et al (2003). Firstly, different methods can be utilized for different purposes in the study. For instance, the observations and secondary data were used to understand the student perspective whereas interviews and a questionnaire were found more suitable in addressing the MNC perspective. Secondly, the possibility to understand and correctly interpret the data is enhanced when different sources of data support each other in regards to research on a specific dimension. For example, when analyzing the questionnaire results, interview findings were used to cross-check and interpret the data to ensure accurate conclusions.

A combination of different methods in the investigation of the same phenomenon is called methodological triangulation (Jick, 1979). Triangulation is a recommended method when there is little theory in the field from the past (Gorard & Taylor, 2004), as is the case in this study. It is also mentioned to have great benefits in guaranteeing the reliability of the findings due to the increased likelihood of interpreting data correctly (Jick, 1979).

### ***3.4. Data Collection Methods***

This part will define the different data collection techniques used for gathering the empirical data in a chronological order.

#### **3.4.1. Exploratory interview**

The collection of the empirical data started by an exploratory interview which was arranged to understand the topic and its key issues more in depth before embarking the questionnaire. Saunders et al (2003) stated that holding interviews before embarking the questionnaire enables

the researcher to understand the key topics and concentrate on those in the questionnaire. This was also recommended by Gorard & Taylor, 2004, when the existing theory is vague and found most appropriate manner for this study to ensure an ideal questionnaire set-up for gaining substantial and accurate data.

The exploratory interview was held with the HR Specialist Riikka Korhonen from KONE Corporation that has an established international internship program targeting graduate students. The interviewee was chosen due to her expertise and important role in the international internship program. In addition, the interviewee is a former CEMS MIM student from Helsinki School of Economics and therefore it was regarded that she has substantial knowledge on the topic.

The interview was a semi structured interview which means that the interviewee was presented with a list of themes that were discussed during the interview (Saunders et al, 2003). The same interview themes were also used in the interviews that were held after embarking the questionnaire and they can be seen in the appendix 2.

### **3.4.2. On-line Questionnaire**

After the exploratory interview with the HR Specialist from KONE Corporation was held the survey was designed based on the findings from the existing theory and the findings from the exploratory interview. A questionnaire consisting of twelve (12) questions, which were all developed specifically for this research, was embarked using the Survey Monkey tool which is an online survey tool that enables creating surveys and collecting responses in the on-line environment.

Web based on-line questionnaire was chosen as one of the data collection tool because it allows reaching many respondents within a short period of time. It was also found the most suitable tool in reaching people from different geographical locations. Saunders et al (2003) mentioned that questionnaires used in descriptive studies enable the researcher to identify and describe the variability of different phenomena. However, questionnaire is also characterized by difficulties

such as the impossibility to control, who in reality answers it, and the limited answer options for the respondents (Saunders et al, 2003).

Respondents were asked to indicate the extent to which they found different factors important. The extent to which respondents found factors important was measured on a five point Likert scale with 1 (one) being completely unimportant to 5 (five) being extremely important. Additionally, four open-ended questions dealing with strategic goals, successful internship outcomes, and important personal qualities were asked. Finally, two questions of a demographic nature were presented to identify the number of employees and the country of origin of a responding MNC.

Before sending out the survey, it was tested with two people from two different countries and cultural background to ensure the understandability of the survey questions. One of the test persons was a native English speaker and another one had Danish as his mother tongue. The testing resulted in changes in wording for two questions in order to achieve more understandable questionnaire. Testing questionnaires is also recommended by Saunders (2003) in order to secure a reliable data gathering and ensure that the respondents understand the questions correctly.

The survey was sent to the CEMS MIM headquarters in Paris, from where it was directed to 55 CEMS Corporate partners. Sending the survey for the CEMS Corporate partners was enabled by the support received from the CEMS MIM office in Helsinki School of Economics and the CEMS MIM headquarters in Paris.

### **3.4.3. Interviews**

In addition to the exploratory pre-interview, three more interviews were conducted after the survey was embarked and sent out to the respondents. These interviews were held in order to gather qualitative data that can be utilized in interpreting the survey results in a manner that guarantees the reliability of the findings. The interviewees were chosen based on their expertise and knowledge on organizing internships in organizations.

The list of interviewees is presented in Table 1. The table presents the names of the interviewees, the titles of the interviewees, the organizations that the interviewees represent as well as the date when the interviews were held. It should be noted that out of the four interviewees, KONE Corporation, ABB and NOKIA represent CEMS Corporate partners whereas Helsinki School of Economics (HSE) is an Academic member of CEMS MIM network.

<b>TABLE 1: Interviews in a chronological order</b>			
<b>Interviewee</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Date</b>
Riikka Korhonen	KONE Corporation	HR Specialist	20.3.2009
Peter Bedford	ABB	Head of Global Sourcing	28.5.2009
Stephen Lofrese	NOKIA	Senior Manager, Workforce Planning	3.6.2009
Leena Plym-Rissanen	HSE	Head of Career Services	25.6.2009

Table 1: List of the interviewees

All the interviews were semi structured which means that the interviewees were provided with a list of themes and questions which were all covered in the interview (Saunders et al, 2003). The interview themes can be seen in the Appendices 2 and 3. The sequence of the questions varied and sometimes the researcher felt that it was important to ask specifying questions on some of the issues mentioned by the interviewee. All the interviews were transcribed immediately afterwards in order to guarantee the correct documentation of the research.

Two of the interviews were conducted in Finnish whereas two of them were conducted in English. Welch & Piekkari (2006) agreed that there are many factors affecting the choice of the interview language within the international fieldwork. It was mentioned that sometimes the language is specified when approaching the interviewees whereas: (Welch & Piekkari, 2006, 426) *‘another course of action is not to raise the question of the interview language explicitly – rather, the interviewee may assume that the language in which the first contact takes place and access is negotiated is also the language of the interview’*. Regarding to this study, it was found that approaching Finnish interviewees in Finnish and non-Finnish interviewees in English was the most natural option and the interview language resulted to be the language interviewees were

originally contacted with. When the Finnish interviewees are quoted in the empirical part, the quotation is a direct English translation of the interview transcript.

#### **3.4.4. Observations**

In addition to the on-line questionnaire and the four interviews, this research also utilizes observation of attitudes and experiences of peer CEMS students. Observations were collected and documented during the spring 2009 in occasions where the researcher discussed with peer CEMS students about their internship experiences. The observations were used as examples when specific characters of international internships were highlighted in the empirical findings chapter. Because of the sensitive nature of one's opinions towards a former internship provider, the examples are presented in an anonymous manner. In addition to the observations of other CEMS students, the researcher also utilizes her own experience from an internship that was implemented at the learning and development department of Shell International B.V. in the Netherlands.

#### **3.4.5. Secondary data**

In order to interpret the empirical data and confirm findings, secondary data sources were also utilized in the empirical part of this thesis. These sources constituted of other studies as well as information found on the web pages. Saunders et al (2003) also recommended the use of secondary data to support the primary data findings and highlighted that most of the time the use of secondary data alone is not substantial to fill requirements of a research project. One important source of secondary data relevant to this study is a research made in collaboration with CEMS and L'oreal (Mayrhofer et al, 2009) about choosing a job and the first employer among CEMS students.

### **3.5. Data Analysis**

The transcripts from the interviews were analyzed by coding the data. In practice, this has been done so that the transcripts were first read through to get an overall picture of the interview responses. Subsequently, the views were categorized according to themes and grouped based on which research question they provided an insight to. The findings from the interview analysis are presented in both; discursive and quoted formats in the empirical part.

The quantitative data was to some extent analyzed using t-test when comparing the responses of MNCs providing and MNCs not providing international internship opportunities. T-tests were used to determine if significant differences existed between the companies that offer internships only in national context and companies that offer international internships. Only one question in the questionnaire resulted in statistically significant differences between the two respondent groups and therefore that is the only table (Table 7) where the questionnaire answers of those MNCs not providing international internships are also presented.

In this research like in most social research, the "rule of thumb" is to set the alpha level at .05 when conducting and analyzing the results of a t-test. Some researchers state that t-tests are not applicable for a very small amount of responses. However, more recently, the researchers (Bakeman & Robinson, 2004) have agreed that t-tests can even be conducted for a very small amount of responses. It should be noted, that in order to be significant the t-value has to be relatively higher in the case when the response amount is lower compared to the case of higher response amount.

It should be mentioned that this was not the initial strategy to analyze the quantitative data due to the assumption that only MNCs providing international internship offers would answer the questionnaire. However, the questionnaire was sent out to all CEMS Corporate partners and some of them only offering internships in local basis found it meaningful to fill in the questionnaire. This provided the researcher with a new opportunity to compare the data between these two groups. It has to be noted though that due to the low total amount of respondents (14), the survey is only indicative with no statistically meaningful results.

At last, it has to be noted that the initial goal of the online questionnaire was to indicate the trends in MNCs' responses and use it as an exploratory survey. For instance, it was found important to find how MNCs rate different goals for providing international internships and the comparison with the group providing only local internship did not provide interesting differences. This was mainly due to what was also assumed in the theory part; the goals for



international and local internship programs are similar. Yet, the trends shown by quantitative data were used to discuss the relative importance of different goals and this data was reflected with the qualitative data from the interviews. The findings of the quantitative part are presented in a table format.

### ***3.5. Reliability and Validity***

Reliability and validity are crucial in order to produce descriptions of the social world that in a controllable manner contribute to the knowledge of social phenomena (Saunders, 2003). Reliability refers to the expectation that any researcher should achieve the same findings of the phenomena if the research would be re-conducted. To ensure this, careful documentation on the steps taken during the research process is required (Saunders et al, 2003). This chapter guides the reader through this research and therefore ensures the repeatability of the study. In order to ensure an appropriate documentation and interpretation of the data, all the four interviews conducted were transcribed immediately afterwards. Two of the interviews were conducted in Finnish and the quotations were translated to English. The interview questions as well as the questionnaire summary are attached to this research as Appendices 1, 2 and 3.

Validity is another important criterion of research. Validity refers to the integrity of the conclusions of the research (Saunders, 2003). Jick (1979) has mentioned that triangulation, which refers to using multiple research methods for finding answers to same research dimension, is an excellent tool for ensuring the validity of the findings. This study utilized triangulation to ensure that the survey responses are coherent with the qualitative findings. Additionally, in order to secure the focus on only the key issues regarding the international internships, the questionnaire was designed based on a pre-interview of the topic.

## **4. Findings and Analysis**

In this chapter, empirical findings collected through four interviews, the online questionnaire, researcher's own experience and observations, and secondary data are analyzed in order to answer the research questions embarked in the beginning of the thesis. First, the general information of the empirical data sources is introduced after which the structure of this chapter follows the order of the research questions; Section 4.2 discusses finding of organizing internship programs in MNCs and thus answers to the first research question, Section 4.3 presents the findings on motivations behind international internship programs and therefore answers research question 2 and Sections 4.4 - 4.6 discuss the roles and expectations of each stakeholder in different phases of the internship process and thus answer to the research question 3.

### ***4.1. Empirical data sources***

The findings are based on the four interviews, the on-line questionnaire, researcher's own experiences as well as on the secondary data sources. Three out of four interviewees were company representatives and one was a representative from HSE's career services department. All the three companies that were interviewed for the thesis provided internships in international context to some extent, meaning that one of them had a more global approach in organizing the internship program whereas two implemented a local approach when organizing their internship programs.

The online questionnaire was sent out to all of the CEMS Corporate partners (55 in total) and 14 answers were received which resulted in 25,5 percentage reply rate. Out of the 14 respondents, 12 offered graduate or undergraduate students with internships and 8 offered internships in an international context, meaning that the internship is implemented outside of students' home country. Only the answers provided by MNCs offering internships in an international context were used for analysis purposes.

**TABLE 2: The portion of respondents offering internships**

Does your company provide short-term internships for undergraduate/graduate students?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	85,7%	12
No	14,3%	2

Table 2: The portion of respondents offering internships

**TABLE 3: The portion of respondents offering international internships**

If yes, are the internships provided in the international context? (The internship is done outside of student's home country)

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	66,7%	8
No	33,3%	4

Table 3: The portion of respondents offering international internships

The respondents operate in several industries and the industry of the respondents was left undefined due to the purpose of the study which was to find the perspective of MNCs in general. Obviously, different industries may implement different recruitment practices and have different requirements for their workforce. In order to generalize the study, this factor was not taken into account.

Due to the low amount of the respondents, the survey results do not have statistical significance. However, the survey results provide evidence of certain trends and sometimes these trends were confirmed with interviews.

In order to learn more about the survey respondents, they were asked to define the country of origin of the MNC they represented, as well as the number of employees in their organization. All the respondents reported to be European based except the one who reported county of origin

in both; United Kingdom and United States. Rest of the respondents came from Finland, Switzerland, Italy, Denmark, United Kingdom, France, Germany and the Netherlands.

<b>TABLE 4: Respondents' Country of Origin</b>	
1. Finland	8. France
2. Switzerland	9. Germany
3. Switzerland	10. France
4. Italy	11. United Kingdom
5. Denmark	12. The Netherlands
6. United Kingdom	13. Switzerland
7. United Kingdom /US	14. Switzerland

Table 4: Respondents' country of origin

The number of employees in the respondents' organizations varied from 1700 to 125 000. The average number of employees was 52180 and based on these numbers it can be agreed that all the respondents represented a large company. All the respondents were assumed to be MNCs due to the international criteria there are for becoming a CEMS Corporate partner.

<b>TABLE 5: Number of employees in the MNCs taking part to the research</b>	
1. 35 000	8. 38 000
2. 120 000	9. 1 700
3. 47 800	10. 77 000
4. 14 000 (Europe)	11. 125 000
5. 27 000	12. 100 000
6. 30 000	13. 45 000
7. 60 000	14. 10 000

Table 5: Number of employees in respondent organizations

#### ***4.2. Organizing international internships in MNCs***

In order to answer the first research question on how international internships are organized in MNCs, it is important to briefly describe different manners in which MNCs that took part to this research tend to organize their internship programs. This dimension was not included into the survey and therefore interview findings are used to describe the organizational side of the internships.

Two major dimensions in which companies differ in organizing internship programs were found. The first dimension is whether the internship program is managed globally or locally and the second dimension refers to how a particular internship is structured.

If the global approach in organizing international internships is implemented, internships are normally managed through company's global HR function whereas in the local approach subsidiaries manage their own internship programs locally and a global HR function is not involved in the process. Out of the three MNCs whose specialists were interviewed, one had a clearly global approach to internships whereas two had implemented more of a local approach. However, one of the MNCs with a local approach used to have a very structured globally managed internship program that is no longer implemented in the company. It was found that the global model was clearly aiming to provide international opportunities for students whereas in locally managed models, international opportunities were not completely excluded, but the internships were mainly promoted for the local students instead of aiming to attract international students.

The MNC that had adopted a global approach in organizing their internship program also highlighted that they always hire an intern that is not a citizen of a country where the internship is implemented in order to provide students with truly international work experience:

*'We are yearly offering approximately 30 internship positions around the world for mainly graduate students. International positions in Finland, Company's home country, are provided for non-Finnish students, whereas for positions abroad, anyone expect a host-country nationality can be recruited... We cover the costs of housing and transportation as well provide students with a monthly allowance'*

However, this applies only to the company's international internship program and it has to be noted that the same company also had a local internship program in place where local students were offered summer internships in their home countries to some extent. The international program was considered more of an 'elite' program for highly talented students and it was managed as well as promoted separately from company's local internship program. The way this international internship program was organized in the company was described by the interviewee as follows:

*'Certain projects are implemented only once per year and some of these projects are exclusively reserved for the interns in our international trainee program. The idea is that the managers of each department will express their need for an intern during October or November to the Global HR, who will then organize the recruitment, selection and allocation of the interns during the spring.'*

Another interviewee from an MNC that used to have a structured internship program in place, but is no longer implementing it, described the former internship program as follows:

*'..we used to have a very international program where we would have internships in different countries and had a whole program around that, we would pay for the housing and moving of goods (such as furniture) and that was actually working quite well for two or three years. Then at least we faced one of our financial messes in early 2000 when the mobile market crashed and then we stopped the program and thought to start it again in one point, but then again.., now it is not really the time for that either..'*

It can be agreed based on the interview findings, that the global approach is used especially when international opportunities are offered and supported. However, due to the international nature of the internship program; relocating people and providing an accommodation, the costs of this global approach are higher than the costs related to the local approach. This may cause what one of the interviewees mentioned: cutting down these structured, globally managed programs during the financially challenging times.

Two of the MNCs whose representatives were interviewed for the thesis are currently offering students with internships that are managed locally. However, as mentioned before, another one

of these MNCs used to have a centrally organized internship program and the interviewee from another MNC mentioned that he would personally like to see more global and standardized internship program in the future.

The interviewee from MNC with a locally managed internship program did not exclude the possibility of having students accomplishing their internship in a country outside of their home country.

*'We do provide students internships. However, this depends on the local unit and we don't have a structured way in arranging the internships globally. Internships are mainly provided in the local context, however, if a qualified foreign student who has the required knowledge is in the country and applies for the internship; of course we can take him in as well.'*

The same interviewee also mentioned the costs of a globally arranged internship program as the major challenge of these types of programs.

*'The problem with arranging international internships is the costs related to it. If we hire a Chinese person to work in Sweden, are we expected to pay for the travel expenses? Of course we don't want to invest as much money on those employees staying in the company only for few months as for those staying permanently in the company.'*

The interviewee from the MNC that used to have a globally managed internship program and is now organizing internships locally, mentioned that the internship programs in the organization are to some extent planned based on the educational system of the target country:

*'..they (internships) are more local: Finland has one ..as well as U.S. has a small program, Germany has one too.. We also take in summer students and so on. However this year we are not offering anything much.. How this is done links, at least in my point of view, with the educational system of the country. For example in Germany where almost all the students need to have an internship in order to get their degrees, we offer more of them. In Germany we even had a company that was organizing those for us there.'*

However, even though the MNC had locally arranged internship programs, the interviewee did not exclude the possibility for students to take part to a locally managed program outside of their home country:

*‘These programs are mainly for local students and they are promoted only in local basis...However, if a student knows, for example, that he wants to go to Germany and especially looks into our opportunities there, of course we can hire him... basically our company language is English so no matter where you go as long as it is not a factory floor, you really shouldn’t worry too much (about the language). So technically everyone can apply, although, typically it is for the local students.*

In conclusion, from the three MNCs, whose representatives were interviewed, only one had a global approach which clearly targeted in providing students with international opportunities. Two of the MNCs implemented a local approach where international opportunities were not set as the main priority of the program, but the possibility of a foreign student joining was not excluded. One of the main reasons for not organizing a global internship program was found to be the costs related to it whereas its main benefits seem to be in employer branding, increasing the knowledge of the company among foreign students and achieving a larger applicant pool. These benefits are discussed more in depth in the chapter 4.3.1.

The other dimension that differentiates the ways in which MNCs organize their internship programs, is the nature of the project or more frankly, whether the internship consists of a specifically defined project or not. Typically a clearly defined project enables an intern to take responsibility of the completion of the project and is easier to evaluate from MNC’s point of view. Internship consisting of several ad hoc tasks may feel less organized from an intern point of view and make the final evaluation of an intern more complicated for the MNC due to less tangible evidence of the work.

Two out of the three interviewees described their internships as always consisting of a specified project. It was mentioned by these two interviewees that this is done in order to ease the evaluation as well as to get real projects completed.

*‘..In other words, interns are always hired to real projects..’*



Another interviewee gave more tangible example of a real internship project:

*'I would like to give an example of a project that can be assigned to the intern. Because we don't have unified data management system in our company, we also don't have an overview of people retiring within next ten years. So we don't know how many people with key skills will retire (as whole) and by key skills I don't only mean a highly skilled finance person but also a person working in the factory with specific equipments. Only the HR manager of each unit will know the overview of who will be retiring. So, the project given to an intern can be to collect the data from all the HR managers in different countries and create an overview of the key skills that will be needed to retain in the future. This is an example of a clearly defined project. Because the project is clearly defined it is easy to evaluate and the impact on the organization is easy to identify. The intern is also always hired to work on a real project.'*

This example given by the interviewee describes a specific project directed to an intern. As mentioned by the interviewee it is useful in evaluating the performance of an intern. However, even though there are benefits in clearly defined projects, not all the MNCs implement the approach; Third interviewee stated that the internship can be both; clearly defined project or

*'Project definition depends on the country and many things, might be both, very defined or not at all.'*

A company might choose an approach where the intern works with several ad hoc tasks instead of a clearly defined project for many different reasons.

To conclude, Figure 3 demonstrates the four different approaches in organizing internships in MNCs:

	<b>Local approach</b>	<b>Global approach</b>
<b>Clearly defined project</b>	<p>Locally managed, well structured internships program</p> <p>Typical for many auditing and accounting companies</p>	<p>Globally managed, well structured internship program</p> <p>Resembles the concept of international internship program in an MNC</p>
<b>No clearly defined project</b>	<p>Locally managed internship program without a clear project definition</p> <p>Resembles a typical ‘summer job’</p>	<p>Globally managed internship program without a clear project definition</p>

Figure 3: Different types of internships in MNCs (Source: own contribution)

The approach in the upper right corner, with a clearly defined project and globally managed internship program was found to be most popular way in organizing truly international internship programs. This approach aims to attract students globally instead of promoting the program only for the local students. In addition, the internship consists of a clearly defined project which is relatively easy to evaluate. This approach was adopted by one of the MNCs whose representatives were interviewed. The approach had been adopted by the other MNC who used to have an international internship program in place.

None of the interviewees represented a MNC with a globally managed internship program without a clear project definition. This is understandable due to the fact that globally managed

programs are costly and if the investment is decided to be made, normally the planning of these programs is rather structured in order to gain return on the investment.

The approach where the project is clearly defined and the program is locally managed was adopted by two MNCs, however, one of them only defined the project in some occasions and sometimes the internships also consisted of several ad hoc tasks. This approach was also found to be typical approach for organizing internship programs in many auditing and accounting companies where the knowledge of the local language is seen essential (Sessions, 2007; Messner, 1999)

The approach presented in the lower left corner of the matrix, locally managed, without a clear project definition, resembles more of a traditional summer job than a structured internship program. The approach can be used for instance in acquiring workforce for the summer period when the full time employees normally have their holidays. The advantages of this approach are its relatively low costs in comparison to the globally managed approach with a clearly defined project. Costs are lower due inexistent relocation costs and fewer resources needed for the planning and coordinating the program. One interviewee also mentioned that the company he represented offers summer jobs for students in order to help them to start their careers and gain normally their first relevant work experience:

*‘...we have like 1000 people showing up at summer and working in the factories and it is very basic level work that they are doing. This is something they do to get something into their resumes and of course they come back the next year and do something a bit different...However, this is more like a summer job than an internship’*

It should be noticed that even though the global approach with clearly defined project in place was found as the most popular manner in organizing truly international internship programs, due to the fact that most of the MNCs have English as their company language, none of the presented approaches completely exclude the possibility of a student outside of the MNCs local subsidiary applying or being hired for the internship position.

### 4.3. Motivations for International internships

This section discusses the research question 2 on what are each stakeholder's motivations for international internships. First, MNC perspective is discussed based on the interview and survey findings and secondly, the benefits for the university are discussed based on the interview with the Head of Helsinki School of Economics' career center and at last, the benefits for students are discussed based on the observations and own experiences of the researcher.

#### 4.3.1 MNC's strategic goals in providing students with international internships

In this section, the strategic goals behind providing students with international internships are discussed and the empirical findings from the interviews and the survey will be presented. As predicted, the survey revealed that talent attraction and employer branding play important roles in providing international internships. However, also other goals were identified.

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**TABLE 6: Strategic goals behind offering international internships**

What is the strategic goal behind providing students with the international internships?

(Scale 1-5, 5= very important, 1= not at all important)

Answer Options	Rating Average	Response Count
Enhancing the company brand (Employer branding)	4,67	8
Identifying talents in an early phase of their career	4,75	8
Achieving temporary workforce for peak work load periods	2,25	8
Achieving a larger applicant pool	3,38	8
Other	3,00	3

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Table 6: Strategic goals behind providing students with international internships

When looking at Table 6, it can be agreed that the most important strategic goals identified by the respondents were employer branding (mean: 4,67) as well as talent management (mean: 4,75). Talent management as the most important goal for internships was also confirmed by McCollum & Schoening (2004) who stated that especially business internship are used as a tool for recruiting talented students.

Employer branding and talent management were also found as very important goals for international internship programs by all the interviewees. Representative from the MNC who had adopted global approach in organizing internships said;

*'The goal of the international internship program is to get to know potential future employees and to get good, talented students to apply for us. So it could be said that the specific goal for the international internship program is employer branding'*

When an interviewee from an MNC with a local approach was asked how he would see the benefit of a more global manner in organizing internships, he replied:

*'I would personally like to use (international) internships in a more structured manner to enhance the employer brand. Our competitive advantage is our skilled and highly qualified workforce and it is important to attract them. The problem with our employer brand is that it is not a consumer brand such as Siemens and therefore we are not as known among our future employees.'*

At last, when the interviewee from the MNC which use to have an international internship in place was asked for the strategic goal for the former program, he also mentioned that it was mostly employer branding:

*'So that was basically everything from employer branding...You see, our company is of course a good place to work at and in Finland it is a very recognized employer, but the product brand does not always correlate with the employer brand and in India (for example) our product brand is very high, but our employer brand is not so high. So we have 70 per cent of a market share but number of people applying for us compared to IBM or apple or Google and so on is not so high... So we are not seen as a cool employer by the young graduates. So in my mind it is important that we have internships so that we can get people in to realize what working here is all about because otherwise we have a very poor chance at getting them (to apply later on).'*

It is agreeable based on the research findings that the most important goals behind organizing international internship programs are employer branding and talent attraction. However, other interesting findings were also made: Achieving a larger applicant pool was not perceived as important as employer branding and talent attraction with the mean of 3,38. However, it was mentioned by the interviewee from the MNC that had a globally managed internship program in place as one of the important goals of the program:

*‘Because the program is global and also targeted for non- Finnish students, and the company language is English, we can achieve a larger applicant pool...and thus explore the global talent pool’*

Three of the eight survey respondents answered ‘other’ when asked for the important goals behind providing students with international internships. Two of the respondents answered 4 indicating a relatively high importance and one of the respondents answered 1 which indicates the lowest importance. This resulted in relatively low average of 3 for the answer option. However, due to these two answers indicating high importance it was perceived relevant to look into what these other factors are. Preceding question asked for a specification in case that the respondent answered ‘other’. Two specifications were received from the respondents who indicated high importance for the answer option ‘other’. The respondent, who indicated lowest importance, did not offer any specifications.

First specification described the strategic goal as *‘Convincing students to join our talent programmes’* which was somewhat company specific and can be categorized as a talent attraction strategy due to the aim to attract students to join company’s own talent programs and therefore achieve talented future workforce. More interestingly, the second specification was to acquire a fresh perspective to every day work as well as to enhance MNCs global mindset:

*‘Use new, out of the box and fresh approaches to certain topics, new styles of working and new know how from the academic world. Also to foster the global mindset in our company.’*

To gain new know how and ‘out-of-box-thinking’ was also mentioned as an important goal for international internship programs one of the interviewees. He described one of the goals for their internship program as follows:

*‘Other goals for these internships are to gain fresh knowledge, have “consultancy” work done cost efficiently as well have skilled people for doing the work that is needed to be done.’*

According to these two findings, it can be agreed that gaining new knowledge straight from the university is also an important reason to arrange internship programs.

The answer option 'achieving temporary workforce for peak workload periods' was indicated (2,25) as the least important goal for arranging international internship programs. It was also confirmed by one of the interviewees that achieving workforce was not a goal such when it came to their internship programs in general:

*'...I would say that it is very rarely about filling resources. Although, we do sometimes have this for summer, but then it is about summer work and not an internship'*

It can be concluded that most important goals for providing students with international internships are employer branding together with talent attraction. In addition to these goals, gaining fresh knowledge and having consultancy work done at low costs were mentioned as an important driver of these programs. At last, achieving a larger applicant pool and exploring the local talent pool was found to be an important strategic goal to some extent.

#### **4.3.2. Benefits of internship programs from a university perspective**

In order to describe the benefits of an international internship programs from the point of view of university, a representative of HSE's career services department was interviewed.

An international internship is a mandatory part of the CEMS MIM curricula and therefore all the graduate students enrolled to this master program are required to take part to an internship program abroad. However, in Helsinki School of Economics, this is the only additional master degree that has an internship as a mandatory part of the curricula which means that most of the graduate students are not required to do an internship. According to the interviewee this was due to the theoretical nature of the degree which makes it difficult to gain extra value on the degree by doing an internship:

*'A regular master degree at HSE does not include a mandatory internship...This can be interpreted so that it is not perceived very important..It is more important to do an internship when you are studying to be a doctor or a teacher..Because we are a business school, we wanted to keep the degree rather theoretical...'*

However, internship programs were perceived as a good tool to enhance the cooperation between the University and the corporate world. Cooperation to promote internship programs is normally

organized through the career center of HSE and HSE and CEMS partner programs aim to offer the companies better visibility among the students.

*'The benefit of these programs is, that being a business school, connections to the corporate world are essential...It is very important to have external lecturers and so on..In my mind it is the the corner stone of a business school with a good reputation that the connections to the corporate world are excellent'*

This finding was also confirmed by Gault et al (2000, 52) who stated:

*'...internship programs offer tremendous potential for improving the relationship between the university and the business community.'*

Gault et al (2000) also found that the future career success was related internships during the studies. The career success of university alumnis is related to the reputation of the business school and thus it can be agreed that an indirict benefit of the internships programs is the enhanced reputation of the business school. This was confimed by Campell Clark (2003, 472):

*'This added experience (from internships) makes students more employable and enhances business schools' reputations for student placement.'*

In conclusion, the benefits of an international internship program perceived by university are mostly indirect. Internship programs are seen as a good tool in enhancing the cooperation between university and the companies and additionally, improve the reputation of the university through enhanced placement of alumni.

#### **4.3.3. Benefits of international internship programs from a student perspective**

This part of the findings is based on researcher's own experience from the benefits of an international internship program that was done at the Shell International B.V. in the Netherlands. The findings are reflected with the existing literature in order to confirm them to some extent.

International internship is a mandatory part of CEMS MIM Curricula and thus the primary reason for applying to international internships from a student's point of view is to complete the



degree. However, internship is perceived beneficial in order to gain international work experience in one's CV, learning working culture outside of student's home country, and depending on the organization where the internship is completed; learning to work in a truly international environment. These factors are found important as well as beneficial in the future career search. It was also confirmed by Campell Clark (2003) and that students perceived enhanced employability after being part of an internship program.

A part from the international aspects of an international internship programs, students also find it beneficial to gain work experience from the discipline they are interested in. For some students the international internship was a first real work experience and thus it was perceived beneficial in the decision making about future career paths.

Interestingly, sometimes international internship which was done as a part of the CEMS program was found to be beneficial in order to find what the intern did not want to work with in the future. For instance, one of the peer CEMS students of the researcher did his mandatory international internship program in the banking sector which he then, during the internship, found rather unattractive and as an impossible choice in regards to his future career. Afterwards, he was provided a full time position in the same company, but refused the offer due to impression he had formed during his internship, and accepted another offer from a completely different industry.

This was an example, which showed the usefulness of the internships as a decision making tool regarding to students' future career. However, indirectly this example was also beneficial from the company's perspective due to avoiding a situation where the person would have started in the full time position and found the work rather unattractive resulting in a low tenure within the company. This would have had caused the company extra costs in hiring a new person as well as sunk costs used in the training of the leaving employee.

In other words, if the intern stays in the company after the internship, it is assumed he finds the work interesting and is likely to stay within the company longer than an employee who is not hired through an internship program and does not have previous experience from the company/industry. This was also confirmed by a research that was conducted by the National

Association of Colleges and Employers. According to the research, more than one-third (37%) of employers surveyed reported higher retention in the first year of hire among former interns than their full-time colleagues who did not go through their internship program. Five years after hire, nearly half (49%) reported higher retention among former interns (Experiential Education Survey, 2008).

Same was reported by HR Focus (2005, 7): *‘Also Interns may be better prepared, more productive (and faster), and stay longer when they become permanent employees.’*

Many other benefits of the internship programs in general were found in the literature; Gault et al (2000) found internships beneficial due to higher starting salaries for those students who had *‘graduates with direct industry experience would be more likely to receive offers at the upper end of the entry-level salary range’*. This is also likely to be true among the CEMS students. However, no tangible evidence of this benefit was found.

In conclusion, international internship programs are beneficial for students in several ways; students gain international and functional experience that helps them to make decisions on their future careers. In addition, students with internship experience are likely to gain higher starting salaries and more responsibility when starting in a first full time position. Indirectly, the experience gained by students, benefits future employers in a way that the employees with previous experience from the company are likely to have higher retention rates.

#### ***4.4. Before the internship***

In this part the focus is to reveal important elements of the recruitment process for the internships. It was asked in the interviews as well as in the survey, what qualities MNCs look for when recruiting an intern to an international internship program. Findings about University’s role and students’ expectations towards the employer in the recruitment process are also discussed in this section.

#### 4.4.1 Ideal intern candidate from an MNC's perspective

In this part of the chapter, findings of MNC's the requirements established in screening process for internships are discussed. Most important finding was revealed when the survey results of MNCs providing international internships were compared to the results of those MNCs who only provided internships in students' in a local context. It was found that the most outstanding difference between these groups was in the appreciation of previous international experience and language skills as well as the appreciation of functional knowledge. The t-tests revealed that only the differences in appreciating language skills and functional knowledge are significant. However, it has to be noted that even though the significance was found by using the t-test, the small amount of respondents may cause the fact that this statistical significance is not reliable evidence of a significant difference.

**TABLE 7: Differences in the recruitment criteria between MNCs offering international internships and MNCs offering local internships**

Question: In the initial screening of students for the internship positions, how important are the following qualities? (scale 1-5, 5 = very important, 1 = not at all important)

\*=statistically significant difference  $\alpha = .05$

<b>Answer Options</b>	<b>MNCs offering international internships (Responses: 8) Rating Average</b>	<b>MNCs not offering international internships (Responses: 4) Rating Average</b>
Language skills	4,78*	3,50*
Functional knowledge needed in the position(Marketing, Accounting etc.)	4,11*	2,75*
Grade point average	3,33	3,75
Evidence of motivation (e.g. extra curricula activities)	4,44	4,00
Previous international experience	3,67	3,00
Previous work experience in a similar position	2,63	2,50
Other	0,00	0,00

Table 7: Differences in MNCs' recruitment criteria

Interestingly, as can be interpreted from Table 8, it seems like all the dimensions expect the GPA are more appreciated by the MNCs offering international internships. However, this may occur

due to the small amount of respondents as well as the tendency of some respondents to report lower importance to all the dimensions in general. Anyhow, it is interesting that MNCs with no international internship offer seemed to appreciate the GPA more than the group with international internship programs in place. This could be due to the fact that when other qualities are not important in regards to the internship position, GPA is a good tool for narrowing down the applicant group. However, the use of GPA in the recruitment process depends on the many factors such as industry and the local culture. When asked about the importance of GPA in regards to screening process for international internships, one interviewee stated that it is a good tool in narrowing down the applicant pool, however, not thought as a good indicator of future success.

*‘This really depends on the people (who you ask from), but in my mind for example GPA is not so important because some of our assessments have shown that GPA is actually not related to future success compared to things like passing a standardized test... This is why GPA is usually used as a cut-off, as a threshold, so we say, we at least want to get someone with certain level of GPA let’s say 3, but going from 3 to 3,5 doesn’t matter that much ..’*

The survey revealed that the most important qualities of international interns from MNC’s perspective were language skills (4,78) whereas the importance for language skills was rated (3,5) less important in regards to local interns. The t-value revealed that the difference was significant. The importance of language skills in regards to international internships was confirmed by all the interviewees. All of the interviewees represented an MNC where the official corporate language was English and thus it was perceived impossible to be hired for an international internship if language skills in English were lacking.

The second most important quality according to the survey findings was evidence of motivation (4,44). This was only confirmed as an important quality by one interviewee who stated:

*‘We are looking for someone who can dedicate to whatever they are doing..’*

Functional knowledge was perceived as a third important quality by the respondents (4,11) and the difference between the group of MNCs that did not offer international internships (2,75) was statistically significant. This in other words means that the applicant has to have the educational

background that fits with the international internship position. One of the interviewees described it as follows:

*'In the screening process, we first of all require knowledge, experience and education regarding to the internship position..'*

Another interviewee stated that only students with the specific study background are offered internships:

*'Internships are not offered to someone who does not have the study background for the discipline they are applying for...because we do not want to be the test ground for whether the student is interested in certain function or not'*

Compared to the importance of functional knowledge, previous experience from a similar position was not perceived very important in the screening process (2,63). This can be interpreted in a way that the companies do not require experience due to the fact that students may not have any previous work experience when they enter the internship positions and thus the study background is more important factor than experiential functional knowledge.

Interestingly, in the survey, previous international experience was not reported as a highly important factor in the screening process for the internship positions (3,67) even though all the respondents answered specifically in regards to their requirements for international internships. However, the relatively low average in the importance resulted mainly due to the variety in the responds; 5 of the respondents had reported very high importance (4 or 5) whereas 3 reported rather low importance (2 or 3). Two of the interviewees found international experience as a highly important factor in the screening process.

*'..In this phase previous international experience such as studying or working abroad is also required. It is very rare we invite someone who's CV lacks this to the interview.'*

When asked why the international experience is perceived important, the same interviewee answered:

*'We do not want the first experience outside of the home country to be the internship (offered by us)..Basically we do not want to take a risk that the person has a culture shock or does not cope abroad..'*

So in fact, it can be interpreted that previous international experience reduces the risk of a situation where the intern does not find living abroad attractive or faces troubles in adapting to the new culture and thus terminates the internship earlier than supposed. This can vary from company to another and as the survey revealed, not all the companies reported this as an essential quality for their future interns.

What is considered as international experience varied between the interviewees. Whereas one interviewee consider it as either working or studying abroad, the other one extended the concept to traveling or any other form of shown interest towards other cultures:

*'Having international experience can be anything from having lived abroad for a year, could be going for a summer program to go study particular language somewhere or even traveling. So it could be any international aspect because our business is so international. Because what we do in regular basis is calling countries in Asia or South America, so it is important to be international... So it is cultural understanding we are looking for'*

To conclude, most important skills required from the students in the recruitment phase are language skills and functional skills. Importance of previous international experience varied from company to company but was still perceived as of high importance by the interviewees. The importance of GPA was higher in the companies that did not provide international internships which was interpreted to be due to the need to identify certain characters of an applicant that can be used as a screening tool in the selection process. However, the difference in the appreciation of GPA was not statistically significant.

#### **4.4.2. University's role in the recruitment process**

The interview with the representative from HSE's career services department revealed that HSE is involved in promoting some of the MNCs international internship programs. This occurs through posting the advertisements of certain internship programs to HSE's career web, which is a web site used for coordinating job offers to undergraduate and graduate students in HSE. It was

also mentioned that some companies that were part of HSE's partner network, had direct mail campaigns to students with certain study discipline.

It was also revealed in the interviews that one of the MNCs was using HSE's CV Bank as a source for qualified workforce when a certain type of position. However, this was done to find right people for graduate programs, not specifically for internship programs.

*'Helsinki school of Economics is one school where we recruit from to our graduate program and we work with the career services to find the right people....So if we need a person with certain type of skill set, we might ask HSE career services to find us potential candidates from their database'*

The interviewee from HSE career services also mentioned that students' career search is supported by providing lectures and workshops in CV and application writing as well as in other topics that are relevant in regards to students' future careers.

In conclusion, HSE's role in the recruitment process is to promote internship offers of the MNCs, maintain the CV bank service and support and educate students in their career search. To some extent it could be agreed that HSE's career services functions as a mediator between the students and the companies.

#### **4.4.3. Students' expectations before the internship**

In this section, the reasons why students apply to a certain MNC for an internship are discussed. The researcher uses her own experiences and observations as a source for the empirical data. This data is also reflected with the secondary data sources.

Firstly, students apply for a certain employer due to their field of interest. For example, if a student is interested in finance, it is more likely that he or she applies for a company where the possibilities to work within that function are broad. Also the findings on research made in collaboration with CEMS and L'oreal (Mayrhofer et al, 2009) about choosing a job and the first employer among CEMS students indicate that the field of interest is an important factor in choosing an employer. However, it has to be noted that when the internship is a mandatory part of the curriculum, the students are somewhat under a pressure to find an internship position and

thus send applications for a wide range companies. This may cause the students to apply also for those positions, they are not the most interested in.

In addition to the field of interest, several factors affect the choice between potential internship providers among students. Many of these factors are individual; some students have a preferred country they would like to live in and the chosen internship provider is based on that preference whereas some students more or less systematically apply for companies which are known to pay relatively high salary for the interns.

In conclusion, the factors that affect the choice of an internship provider among students are various and would need further research in order to reach reliable conclusions.

#### ***4.5. During the internship***

In this part, findings about important implications during the actual internship process are discussed. Firstly, it was asked from the survey respondents and interviewees, what is required from an intern in order to successfully complete the internship. Secondly, it was researched whether and how the university is involved during the internship. It was found that the most important qualities that MNC's expect during the internship are motivation and proactiveness. It was also found that currently HSE is not at all involved in the internship process during the completion of the CEMS internships.

##### **4.5.1. MNC's expectations towards the intern**

This part discusses on which qualities MNCs expect from the interns during the internship. The survey results are summarized in Table 8. The survey results revealed that the most important factors from MNCs perspective, students need, in order to be successful in the internship programs were motivation (4,89) and proactiveness (4,89). The following table will present the results of the survey regarding to the qualities that MNCs perceive important in succeeding in the internship position.



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**TABLE 8: Qualities of a successful intern perceived by the MNCs**

**In order to be successful in the given internship project, the intern needs following qualities: (scale 1-5, 5= extremely important, 1= not at all important)**

<b>Answer Options</b>	<b>Rating Average</b>	<b>Response Count</b>
Functional knowledge specific to the position (e.g. Marketing, Accounting etc.)	3,67	8
Cross-cultural skills	4,22	8
Communication skills	4,44	8
Social skills	4,11	8
Pro activeness	4,89	8
Ability to learn fast	4,78	8
Presentation skills	3,33	8
Enthusiasm	4,44	8
Language skills	4,56	8
Commitment to the internship and to the company	4,67	8
Motivation	4,89	8
Innovativeness	3,89	8
Other	0,00	0

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Table 8: Qualities of a successful intern perceived by the MNCs

When looking at Table 8, an interesting finding is that the importance of functional as well as language skills is reported lower than in the recruitment process for the internships. This is probably due to the fact that attributes such as motivation and pro activeness which were found most important in order to complete the internship successfully, are difficult to identify in the screening process of internship applicants. Thus attributes that can be identified in the screening process are used as a prerequisite for achieving the position whereas intangible qualities play more important role succeeding in the internship. This was also stated by one of the interviewees:

*‘When the intern starts in his job, language skills and functional knowledge are perceived as a prerequisite and personal qualities play more important role...Most important are good communication skills, pro activeness, learning ability, innovativeness, flexibility as well as open mindedness towards a new culture’*

It was also mentioned by the interviewee that intern's cultural skills play an important role in the successful completion of an internship.

*'Due to the short term of an internship, we do not provide students with cultural training and that is why it is important that the student has previous international experience and therefore cultural understanding'*

Ability to learn fast was reported as the third most important (4,78) quality in order to successfully complete the internship. This was also confirmed by one of the interviewees:

*'Learning agility, so basically it means how quickly you can learn something... Because our business is constantly changing we need people who can change their mindsets and their way of working, then we can change as a business..'*

Innovativeness (3,89) and presentation skills (3,33) as well as functional knowledge (3,67) were indicated to be the least important qualities during the internship. As mentioned by one of the interviewees; functional knowledge is very important factor in the recruitment process and often used as a screening criterion for internships. Thus it may be assumed that the intern has a certain level of functional knowledge when starting the internship and is expected to build knowledge during the internship. In order to build on the existing level functional knowledge, learning ability may play more important role than the existing functional skills. The reason for the relatively low indicated importance in innovativeness and presentation skills may occur due to the nature of internship project or tasks which may not involve necessity to present in a high level or to create new concepts or ideas. Perhaps the importance of these skills will increase when the nature of the projects will turn to more challenging in the later state of a career.

To conclude, MNCs expect the interns to be motivated and proactive when completing the internship. Additionally, learning ability was found very important in order to succeed in the internship position.

#### **4.5.2. University's role during the internship**

Currently, HSE is not involved in the completion of CEMS internships. However, the interviewee from HSE's career services mentioned that HSE administrates a separate, public

administration internship program which aims to maintain the public sector as an attractive employer for the HSE students. In this internship program HSE career services is involved with a learning plan that is aiming to improve the learning during the internship program. The interviewee was very satisfied with the plan and wanted to establish a similar learning plan in to CEMS internships

*‘Learning contract is a simple table where the student in cooperation with the worksite supervisor chooses the competencies that will be developed during the internship. Intern’s tasks are also written down explicitly in order to enhance the understanding of what, exactly, can be learned working with those tasks..’*

The interviewee was asked to explain the purpose of the learning plan more in depth. It appeared that in addition to enhancing student’s learning, another goal was to ease the student to identify the specific skills she/he has gained through the internship in order to

*‘The aim of the learning plan is to identify what is learned during the internship in order for the student to write it down explicitly in his/her CV in order to differentiate him/herself from other applicants in the future career search..’*

Chapel (1998, 100) also supported the idea that student’s tasks and responsibilities are clearly identified in cooperation with all the stakeholders. *‘The corporate sponsor, the faculty advisor, and the student should jointly develop the goals for the internship and state them clearly so that everyone understands individual responsibilities. This joint activity will help avoid later misunderstandings and possible disagreements.’* He among other researchers (Campell Clark, 2003) also mentioned several academic assignments as part of a well designed internship program.

HSE did not require any academic work from the students enrolled in an internship program. This is assumed to be reasonable due to Hall et al findings (1995) from the study where they compared student’s and employers attitudes about internship and found that employers are not fully supportive when it comes to university’s involvement to the internship process. It was asked whether the employers would support additional academic work from university’s side

during the internship such as academic paper and the results showed that an average company did not support the idea. This finding was also confirmed by one of the interviewees:

*'We want our interns to be fully committed to the work in our company. The position is a full time..and we don't want to have that time shared with additional work from university's side'*

In conclusion, university's involvement in the internship process is not common in the CEMS program in HSE. However, it has been found important to support the learning during the internship in order to enhance the future employability of the students.

#### **4.5.3. Intern's expectations towards the internship provider during the internship**

This part of the findings is based on researchers own experiences, discussions with peer CEMS students as well as recently published research made in collaboration with CEMS and L'oreal (Mayrhofer et al, 2009) about choosing a job and the first employer among CEMS students

Firstly, CEMS students want their work to be interesting, challenging and result oriented. Especially responsibility was mentioned as an important factor in job satisfaction (Mayrhofer et al, 2009). The report was made to understand the circumstances of a full time job, but it can be assumed that the results can be applied to understand the expectations CEMS students have towards their internships.

The researcher's own experiences are in line with the findings (Mayrhofer et al, 2009) when it comes to the internship project itself; CEMS students are satisfied if they get to work on a real project that they find important and interesting. If the given project resulted to be of no real responsibility, the students showed dissatisfaction towards the internship provider. For instance, one CEMS student who was genuinely interested in working with HR related topics was satisfied after finding an internship at an HR department of a large MNC. However, the project she was assigned was producing a user manual of the HR software used in the company. The task was not exactly HR related and she felt dissatisfied with the task which affected negatively in her motivation during the internship. After the internship was completed, she had no interest in applying for a full time position for the given MNC.

In addition to project related aspects, CEMS students in an international internship programs also appreciated the support in finding an accommodation and creating a network with other interns. This was due to the fact that as most the CEMS internships are implemented outside of student's home country, the support in settling down is found important.

To conclude Section 4.5, MNCs expect mainly proactiveness, motivation and learning ability from the interns enrolled in their international internship programs. Students on the other hand are expecting to be assigned for a project that is interesting, challenging and involves responsibility. The university is interested in enhancing the learning during the internship in order to enhance the future career planning of a student.

As discussed in the part 4.2. all the MNCs do not have a clearly defined project for the interns and students are assigned for several ad hoc tasks. Simultaneously MNCs expect motivation and proactiveness from their interns. Especially motivation is very dependent on the tasks given. Thus assigning a student for a challenging project that requires responsibility may enhance the motivation and therefore benefit all the stakeholders due to enhanced learning and responsibility perceived by a student and higher perceived motivation of an intern from MNCs perspective.

University's role was not found significant in the CEMS internships. This is likely to be a positive element from MNCs point of view due to the findings that indicate disapproval towards extensive academic assignments during the internship. However, the learning plan introduced by HSE was a good example of an involvement which is not overwhelmingly time consuming and yet supports the learning of the students in an internship program.

#### ***4.6. Internship outcomes***

At last, in this part of the findings chapter a successful internship outcome is discussed from the point of view of MNC, university and the student.

##### **4.6.1. Successful internship outcome from MNC's perspective**

MNCs were asked to rate the importance of different factors in defining the successfulness of an internship. These findings will be discussed together with the interview results.

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**TABLE 9: Successful internship outcome from an MNC perspective**

**How important are the following factors in defining a successful internship outcome in your company?(Scale 1-5, 5= very important, 1= not at all important)**

Answer Options	Rating	Response
	Average	Count
Successful completion of a given project/ tasks	4,78	8
Creation of a network within the company by the intern	3,78	8
Overall positive image of the intern is formed among the colleagues and the supervisor	4,44	8
The intern is offered future employment within the company after finishing the internship	3,86	7
The intern creates a long-lasting future relationship with the company which may lead to a future employment should a suitable position appear	4,13	8
Other	5,00	1

---

Table 9: Successful internship outcome from an MNC perspective

Contradictory to what was assumed by the researcher, large amount of MNCs do not use internship programs as a structured recruitment tool or a pipeline to entry level positions and thus the importance of guaranteed future employment in an organization after the internship was perceived relatively unimportant factor (3,86) in describing a successful internship outcome. One interviewee mentioned that the future employment factor is important, but cannot be used as a single criterion in defining a successful internship outcome due to the fact that the company cannot always offer future employment for the intern due to other circumstances.

*We can also say that the second priority for successfulnes is that the internship leads to a future recruitment of an intern (for a full time position)..This is not always the case though due to the problem that we may not be able to hire a succesful intern everytime..'*

The most important factor in defining a successful internship outcome was successful completion of the given tasks (4,78). This was as a prerequisite for evaluating the intern in their performance. This was also indicated by one of the interviewees:

*'The first priority for successfulness is definetely that the clearly defined project has been completed flawlessly and that the intern has left a positive image of himself in the department where he has been working at...So, doing your work flawlessly is very important..'*

One respondent reported 'other' criteria as highly important (5) in defining a successful internship outcome. When asked for a specification, following was provided:

*'The company has made a long lasting impression on the intern and got him interested in our product and our brand.'*

One of the interviewees also indicated the importance of the impression that the intern forms about the company during the internship.

*'..And of course that the people are happy when they leave. So it's kind of word of mouth from the employee perspective...as well as building a career brand for people. So that we can go out to the market and really start competing against Google and Apple to get the right people.'*

It could be interpreted based on these findings that successful internship from MNC's perspective partly consists of successful employer branding even though the internship would not necessarily lead to future recruitment of the intern. This is understandable due to the fact that MNCs may not be able to provide straight forward future employment, yet they would like to ensure that the intern will consider MNC as an employer when making future career decisions.

The factor that the intern creates a long lasting relationship with the organization and thus may be offered future employment should an opportunity in an organization appear was indicated relatively high (4,11). This indicates that MNCs do prefer recruiting former interns to entry level positions if a suitable position is found. However, in this case the intern is not guaranteed future employment upon the completion of an internship. One of the interviewee described this as:

*'In my mind it is building career paths for people..'*

In conclusion, MNCs define a successful outcome to consist of a flawlessly completed project as well as successfully implemented employer branding. To some extent MNCs also see successfulness as a future relationship with an intern. However, guaranteed future employment is rarely seen as the only success criterion due to constantly changing environment and uncertain recruitment possibilities in the future.

#### **4.6.2. Successful internship outcome from University's perspective**

In this part a successful internship outcome is discussed from a University perspective. The interviewee from HSE's career services found it a little complicated to describe the successful outcome from university's perspective due to the overlappingness with the perceived successfulness from student's perspective. However, she wanted to highlight the importance of the learning outcomes of the internship programs:

*'..In my mind, successful internship is when the student has learned and is able to define what he has learned..'*

Indirectly, if the student enhances his own future career perspectives through an internship program, this is somewhat beneficial for the university due to enhanced rankings in alumni placements (Campbell Clark, 2003). Also good corporate relations are guaranteed in a long run if MNCs are satisfied with the quality of students and find it rewarding to be part of partnership programs with the university in order to guarantee the future access to highly qualified students.

In conclusion, if the MNC finds the internship outcome successful it is likely to be successful from the university's point of view due to enhanced corporate relations and possible enhancement in alumni placement rankings in a long run. Obviously, university is also concerned with learning outcomes and as described by the interviewee; finds an internship outcome also successful when the learning is enhanced.



## **5. Conclusions and discussion**

In this part, the conclusions are formed and discussed, managerial implications are presented and at last, suggestions for future research are provided.

### **5.1. Conclusions**

This study contributed to the theory of international internships. In order to remind the reader of the focus of the study, the research questions are presented once again and the conclusions regarding each research question are presented thereafter.

*R1: How are international internship programs organized?*

The findings suggested that companies have several ways of organizing internship programs. These ways were gathered into a matrix form and the advantages and disadvantages of each practice were then discussed. The theory of the internships did not provide answer for how international internships are organized in MNCs, but provided the university perspective (Chapel, 1998; Adler & Loughrin-Sacco, 2003). The findings from the empirical part show that the way internships are organized can be seen in two different dimensions: 1) whether global or local, and 2) with either clear or unclear project definition. Globally managed internships programs aim to promote and support international opportunities while locally managed programs are mainly promoted for local students with some exceptions. The global approach is found an efficient tool in attracting applicants from all over the world in contrast to the locally managed program which mainly concentrates on exploring the local talent pool. The downside of the globally managed international internship program is the costs related to its international nature such as relocation costs of the interns. This causes companies to cut their international internship programs during financially challenging periods of time such as the current financial crisis.

Another dimension in which internship programs in MNCs are differentiated is the level of project definition. It is found common that the internship consists of a clearly defined, meaningful project that is easier to evaluate by the MNC than different ad hoc tasks. Also the theory supports this finding (Messner, 1999). However, it is not uncommon for an internship to consist of different tasks instead of a clearly defined project. If the internship is locally managed

and consists of several ad hoc tasks it was defined as a typical summer job, which is especially popular type of students' summer employment in the Nordic countries. A globally managed internship program with clearly defined projects is defined as a structured international internship program.

*R2: What are the motivations of each stakeholder for international internship programs?*

This study reveals a wide range of motivations for each stakeholder in the CEMS MIM network as well as discussed the role of talent management and employer branding in regards to international internships. The motivations of each stakeholder in international internship programs are various. As assumed in the theory part, it was found that MNCs' main strategic goals behind providing students with international internship programs are talent management and employer branding. In addition to these goals, gaining fresh knowledge and having consultancy work done with relatively low costs were reported as important motivations. The theory suggests that internships in general are also used as a tool for achieving workforce for peak workload periods (Divine et al, 2007); however, this is not supported by the empirical findings of international internships. This may occur due to the fact that this research focused on exclusively in international internships that generally require a higher investment than local internship. If the MNC invests more into the internship, the goal is likely to be more long-term such as talent management and does not aim for gaining workforce for peak load period which is a short-term goal.

Motivations for international internship programs of the university are partly in the improvement of corporate relations. This finding is in accordance with the theory (Gault et al, 2000). In addition, the theory also suggested (Campbell Clark, 2003) that business internships also enhance the reputation of the business schools due to better placement prospects of the alumnus. This is not confirmed by this study, but it is assumed to be true also in regards to international internships. The benefits perceived by the students are mainly revealed in the theory (Divine et al, 2007; Adler & Loughrin-Sacco, 2003); however, some of researcher's own experiences were added to give examples of the existing theory. It is found that the main benefits are: gained international and functional experience, improved career opportunities, and enabled decision making on one's future career paths. Interestingly, it is also found that sometimes an internship

also acts as a negative decision making tool and may prove the intern that he/she does not want to work in a certain company or industry.

*R3: What are the roles and the expectations of each stakeholder in international internship programs in different phases of the internship process?*

In order to research the roles and the expectations of each stakeholder in an international internship, the internship is conceptualized as process consisting of three separate phases: before the internship, during the internship and internship outcomes. All the three phases were then discussed from the point of view of the university, student and MNC. As predicted based on the theory, it was found that in the recruitment process for their international internship programs, MNCs thrive to attract students with good language and substantial functional skills. The questionnaire also indicated that GPA was perceived more a important factor among MNCs that provided local internships than MNCs with international internship offers. However, this finding is rather contradictory due to statistical insignificance of the finding and the difficulties to confirm this with the interviewees.

The most contradictory finding of the MNCs' recruitment process was the importance of previous international experience. Whereas two of the interviewees described previous international experience as one of the most important factor in the selection process of interns, the questionnaire resulted in a relative low importance for this factor. This may be caused by the factor that the two interviewees who rated the importance high were both from a company whose country of origin is Finland whereas the questionnaire respondents were from all over Europe. Perhaps the importance of the previous international experience is a factor which is more appreciated in countries that have had less international exposure in the past due to their relatively distant locations compared to other European countries such as Finland.

University's role in the recruitment process of CEMS students was indicated to be rather insignificant. It acts as an advertising channel for MNCs and in some occasions MNCs may use the career services in identifying potential candidates for some of the company's open positions. The student is responsible for finding his/her international internship individually and the university does not provide direct help in the job search. However, the university supports career

search by organizing events and lectures on for instance improving one's CV. This finding is similar to the role of San Diego State University described by Adler & Loughrin-Sacco (2003) in the theory part.

Universities in CEMS MIM network do not provide training for students to prepare them for international internships. This was contradictory to the findings by Chapel (1998) who suggested that it is important to prepare students for facing cultural differences in order to succeed in their international internships. However, as the CEMS MIM curriculum also includes a mandatory study exchange in a foreign university, it can be assumed that CEMS MIM students already have substantial international experience before being selected for an international internship. Therefore, the need for cultural training is probably perceived less important than in the case where the international internship is the first experience outside of students' home country.

During the internship, MNCs expected interns to be proactive and motivated as well as being capable of learning fast. The importance of functional and language skills in the completion phase was smaller than in the recruitment phase. This was assumed to be caused by the tendency of the MNCs to use these qualities as important indicators in the recruitment phase and then consider them as a prerequisite for the intern during internship. University's role during the completion phase was found to be rather insignificant in regards to CEMS MIM internships. This was also found recommendable due to the findings in the theory (Hall et al, 1995) as well as in the empirical findings which revealed that MNCs are not completely supportive in adding large amounts of academic assignments to internships.

As presumed based on the research made in cooperation with CEMS and L'oreal about choosing the first job (Mayrhofer et al, 2009), interns expect to be employed for interesting, meaningful, projects during their internships. If the project is found unchallenging, it is likely to cause dissatisfaction and demotivation among the interns. This may result in decreased interest towards future employment possibilities within the organization providing the internship.

When it comes to the last phase of the internship process, internship outcomes, a successful internship outcome from the MNC perspective is described to consist of a flawlessly completed project as well as successfully implemented employer branding. To some extent MNCs also see

successfulness as a future employment of an intern. Surprisingly, even though the literature suggested that business internship are commonly used as a recruitment tool (Messner, 1999; McCollum & Schoening, 2004), guaranteed future employment was rarely seen as the most important success criterion for an international internship by an MNC. This may have been due to the current uncertain times characterized by the global financial crises: Due to the uncertain future, MNCs can no more guarantee the future employment of an intern and thus the future employment is not considered as a success criterion by the MNCs during the time period when this research was conducted.

The successfulness from the university's perspective is partly dependent on a successful internship outcome perceived by an MNC or the success perceived by a student. If the MNC is satisfied with interns from a certain university in general, it will maintain its interest to cooperate with the university in the future. This is beneficial for the university due to the importance in maintaining good relations with the business community. Also, if a student finds an internship outcome successful in terms of enhancing his/her future career opportunities, this benefits the university due to a better alumnus placement which enhances university's reputation (Campbell Clark, 2003).

## ***5.2. Managerial Implications***

This part will present some suggestions for MNCs and universities based on the findings of this study. The suggestions are formed in order to improve and optimize the use of international internships in organizations and to help organizations to gain most out of their investment in the human capital.

### **MNC: Keep the talent attraction goal in mind through the internship**

It was found that the most important goals for international internship programs were employer branding and talent management which means that MNCs are driven to organize internships in order to gain access to talented future workforce. Even though it was found that providing international opportunities may enhance the attractiveness of a company, it has to be taken into consideration that after recruiting a student, it is essential to keep the talent attraction goal in mind. The interns expect to work in meaningful, interesting projects during the internship and if

this will not occur, they might feel dissatisfaction and become uninterested in the future career prospects in the MNC providing the internship. Therefore, it is suggested that if the MNC decides to invest on launching an international internship program, careful planning and evaluation should occur in regards the projects the interns work in.

#### **MNC: Utilize the internship program as a pipeline for graduate recruitment**

It was found that even though talent attraction was the main goal behind the international internship programs, it was not common to provide a successful intern with a future employment contract after a completion of an internship. This was due to uncertainty regarding to the possibilities for hiring new employees in the future as well as due to the long time period between the completion of the internship and the graduation of an intern. However, if the investment is made to organize an international internship program in order to gain access to talented future workforce; it would be meaningful to ensure this internship program works as a pipeline for the MNCs graduate recruitment.

#### **University: Design the curricula with important skills in mind**

As stated by many scholars (Campel Clark, 2003) one benefit for universities in international internship programs is the indirect consequence of the improved reputation from the future career placement of its alumnus. When the recruitment process was researched, it was found that essential skills required from students in order to be chosen for an international internship program were excellent language skills and functional knowledge. In order to ensure the attractiveness of university's students, it is essential to ensure that the importance of these skills is recognized when designing the university's curricula. Additionally, especially proactiveness was found as an essential quality in order to succeed in an international internship. This should be considered when planning the specific assignments in the study program, to enhance students' pro activeness already during their studies.

#### **University: Keep relatively low profile during the internship**

Currently, university is not involved in the completion phase of an internship in regards to CEMS MIM internships. Even though Campell Clark (2003) suggested that the educational value of business internships could be enhanced by adding academic assignments to them, other

scholars (Hall et al, 1995) found that this was not perceived as an attractive option from the MNC perspective and this was also confirmed in one of the interviews conducted for this research. Thus, it is recommendable that the university does not interfere too excessively for the implementation of an international internship, but lets the MNC to be responsible for the training of the intern. However, the university can be involved in the training process to a moderate extent, supporting the student to set goals for his or her personal learning and to realize the specific learning outcomes of an internship. A good example of this moderate involvement was the learning contract used by Helsinki School of Economics in regards to their public sector internships.

### ***5.3. Future research directions***

As mentioned several times during this study, the existing theory on international internships is vague. Therefore, many opportunities for future research directions are open. During the research process, the researcher found herself puzzled with many other questions than the actual research questions of this thesis. These questions and dilemmas are presented here in a form of suggestions for the future research of the concept of international internships.

Firstly, it would be interesting to research the success rate of international internship programs in terms of how many of the former interns returned to the company after graduation. More specifically, it would be interesting to compare the relative amounts of returned interns between MNCs. If a particular company would be found to have a significantly higher return rate than others, it would be meaningful to indicate the factors that made the internship program successful in terms of creating a sustainable pipeline for company's graduate recruitment. This knowledge would be valuable in designing and optimizing international internship programs in the future.

Secondly, the effect of country of origin and MNC's industry on internship practices was eliminated in this research due to the low amount of respondents for the survey. However, in the future, it could be interesting to compare internship practices between MNCs in different countries and industries to find out whether the local culture or MNC's industry affect the manner the internships are organized in MNCs.

Thirdly, a research on the responsibility over an internship program in an MNC could provide interesting insights in the relative importance of an international internship program in an MNC. In other words, it could be researched who is responsible of these programs in an MNC, a senior manager or a new graduate. This research would provide interesting insights in the importance of international internship programs in relation to MNC's other HR activities.

At last, this research studied students' perspective on international internship programs based on the researcher's own experiences and observations as well as on secondary data and therefore, did not provide statistically significant data on this perspective. Hence, in the future it would be interesting to conduct a broad survey with CEMS MIM students of their expectations towards the internship provider and thus partly contribute to the knowledge of the critical elements of a successful international internship program. CEMS MIM students provide a particularly excellent research ground for this study due to the fact that they are all required to do an international internship as a part of their studies in international management.



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Lofrese, Stephen. Senior Manager, Workforce planning and employment, NOKIA. Interview held on 3.6.2009 in Keilaniemi, Espoo.

Plym-Rissanen, Leena. Head of Career Services, Helsinki School of Economics. Interview held on 25.6.2009 as a phone interview.

## APPENDIX 1: Survey questions and the summary of all the responds

### 1. Home country of your company

Answer Options	Response Count
	14
<i>answered question</i>	<b>14</b>
<i>skipped question</i>	<b>0</b>

### 2. The number of employees in your company

Answer Options	Response Count
	14
<i>answered question</i>	<b>14</b>
<i>skipped question</i>	<b>0</b>

### 3. Does your company provide short-term internships for undergraduate/graduate students?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	85,7%	12
No	14,3%	2
<i>answered question</i>		<b>14</b>
<i>skipped question</i>		<b>0</b>



---

**4. If yes, are the internships provided in the international context? (The internship is done outside of student's home country)**

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	70,0%	8
No	30,0%	6
<b><i>answered question</i></b>		<b>14</b>
<b><i>skipped question</i></b>		<b>0</b>

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**5. What is the strategic goal behind providing students with the international internships? (Scale 1-5, 5= very important, 1= not at all important)**

Answer Options	1	2	3	4	5	Rating Average	Response Count
Enhancing the company brand (Employer branding)	0	0	1	4	7	4,50	12
Identifying talents in an early phase of their career	0	0	0	2	9	4,82	11
Achieving temporary workforce for peak work load periods	3	3	2	3	0	2,45	11
Achieving a larger applicant pool	1	1	4	4	1	3,27	11
Other	1	0	0	2	0	3,00	3
<b><i>answered question</i></b>							<b>12</b>
<b><i>skipped question</i></b>							<b>2</b>

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**6. If other, please specify what?**

**Answer Options      Response Count**

*answered question*                      **2**

*skipped question*                      **12**

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**7. How important are the following factors in defining a successful internship outcome in your company?(Scale 1-5, 5= very important, 1= not at all important)**


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<b>Answer Options</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>Rating Average</b>	<b>Response Count</b>
Successful completion of a given project/ tasks	0	0	0	3	10	4,77	13
Creation of a network within the company by the intern	0	0	7	5	1	3,54	13
Overall positive image of the intern is formed among the colleagues and the supervisor	0	0	0	8	5	4,38	13
The intern is offered future employment within the company after finishing the internship	0	1	3	6	1	3,64	11
The intern creates a long-lasting future relationship with the company which may lead to a future employment should a suitable position appear	0	0	3	3	6	4,25	12
Other	0	0	0	0	1	5,00	1
<b><i>answered question</i></b>							<b>13</b>
<b><i>skipped question</i></b>							<b>1</b>

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**8. If other, please specify what?**

Answer Options	Response Count
<i>answered question</i>	<b>1</b>
<i>skipped question</i>	<b>13</b>

**9. In the initial screening of students for the internship positions, how important are the following qualities? (scale 1-5, 5 = very important, 1 = not at all important)**

Answer Options	1	2	3	4	5	Rating Average	Response Count
Language skills	0	1	1	3	8	4,38	13
Functional knowledge needed in the position (Marketing, Accounting etc.)	1	0	4	5	3	3,69	13
Grade point average	0	2	4	6	1	3,46	13
Evidence of motivation (e.g. extra curricula activities)	0	0	2	4	6	4,33	12
Previous international experience	1	1	4	5	2	3,46	13
Previous work experience in a similar position	3	2	5	1	1	2,58	12
Other	0	0	0	0	0	0,00	0
<b>Answered question</b>							<b>13</b>
<b>skipped question</b>							<b>1</b>

<b>10. If other, please specify what?</b>	
<b>Answer Options</b>	<b>Response Count</b>
<i>answered question</i>	<b>0</b>
<i>skipped question</i>	<b>14</b>

<b>11. In order to be successful in the given internship project, the intern needs following qualities: (scale 1-5, 5= extremely important, 1= not at all important)</b>							
<b>Answer Options</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>Rating Average</b>	<b>Response Count</b>
Functional knowledge specific to the position (e.g. Marketing, Accounting etc.)	1	1	6	4	1	3,23	13
Cross-cultural skills	0	0	3	7	3	4,00	13
Communication skills	0	0	0	5	8	4,62	13
Social skills	0	0	2	5	6	4,31	13
Proactiveness	0	0	0	3	10	4,77	13
Ability to learn fast	0	0	0	2	11	4,85	13
Presentation skills	0	1	7	5	0	3,31	13
Enthusiasm	0	0	1	4	8	4,54	13
Language skills	1	0	1	6	5	4,08	13
Commitment to the internship and to the company	0	0	0	4	9	4,69	13
Motivation	0	0	0	2	11	4,85	13
Innovativeness	0	0	6	4	3	3,77	13
Other	0	0	0	0	0	0,00	0
<b>Answered question</b>							<b>13</b>
<b>Skipped question</b>							<b>1</b>

<b>12. If other, please specify what?</b>	
<b>Answer Options</b>	<b>Response Count</b>
	0
<i>answered question</i>	<b>0</b>
<i>skipped question</i>	<b>14</b>

## **APPENDIX 2: Interview themes for the semi structured interviews with CEMS Corporate partners**

1. How are internships organized at COMPANY?
2. Which candidates does COMPANY aim to attract with the internship program?
3. What is the strategic goal behind providing students with international internships?
4. How would you describe a successful internship outcome?
5. What qualities (of an intern) are important in the recruitment process for international internships?
6. What are the qualities necessary for an intern in order to be successful in the internship position?
7. What are the normal procedures after the internship (in regards to future employment)?
8. University's involvement during the internship with e.g. additional academic assignments  
– COMPANY's opinion

### **APPENDIX 3: Interview themes for the interview with Career Center of Helsinki School of Economics**

1. What are the benefits from HSE point of view in student internships, especially CEMS internships?
2. Are internships perceived as a good tool to enhance cooperation between university and companies?
3. What does HSE perceive as a successful internship outcome?
4. Does HSE support the student to get more out of the internship experience?
5. Does HSE cooperate (with CEMS corporate partners) in promoting internships to students?
6. Is student's job searching process supported by HSE?
7. If yes, how?